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JANUARY 7 1983

Archaeology 21	History 9, 16
Architecture 19	Literary History 5
Art 8	Literature 6, 20
Biography and Politics 3-4	Magic and Folklore 11
Business 10	Poetry 17
Commentary 12-14	Politics 18
Fiction 23	Religion 22

INDEX OF BOOKS REVIEWED

ALTMAN, JANET GURKIN	<i>Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form</i> [G. S. Rousseau]
ATWOOD, MARGARET	<i>Dancing Girls and Other Stories</i> [Anne Duchêne]
BALL, GEORGE W.	<i>The Past has Another Pattern: Memoirs</i> [Max Beloff]
BANKS, HOWARD	<i>The Rise and Fall of Freddie Laker</i> [Mary Goldring]
BIELSKI, NALLA	<i>Oranges for the Son of Alexander Levy</i> [Jayne Pilling]
BORO, JANET and COLIN	<i>Earth Rites: Fertility Practices in Pre-Industrial Britain</i> [Venetia Newall]
BOYLE, CHARLES	<i>House of Cards</i> [Tim Dooley]
CASSIOY, JOHN	<i>Night Cries</i> [William Scammell]
CHADWICK, JOHN	<i>The Unofficial Commonwealth: The Story of the Commonwealth Foundation 1963-1980</i> [H. S. Ferns]
CLARK, ALICE	<i>Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century</i> [Angeline Goreau]
DIDSBURY, PETER	<i>The Butchers of Hall</i> [William Scammell]
DUDOE, RONNIE	<i>The Life and Times of Lyndon Johnson</i> [Max Beloff]
DUNN, DOUGLAS (Editor)	<i>A Reminiscence: New Poets from Hall</i> [William Scammell]
ELLISWORTH, L. E.	<i>Charles Lowder and the Ritualist Movement</i> [Perry Butler]
EPSTEIN, EDWARD JAY	<i>The Diamond Invention</i> [Richard West]
FERNANDEZ, DOMINIQUE	<i>Drus in main de l'ange</i> [Annette Levers]
FLYNN, CAROL HOULIHAN	<i>Sonnet Richardson: A Man of Letters</i> [G. S. Rousseau]
FRIEDMAN, MAURICE	<i>Martin Buber's Life and Works: The Early Years 1878-1923</i> [Pamela Vermes]
GALLAGHER, JOHN	<i>The Decline, Revival and Fall of the British Empire</i> [V. G. Kiernan]
GOWING, LAWRENCE	<i>Lucian Freud</i> [Catherine Lempert]
GREEN, TIMOTHY	<i>The New World of Gold: The Inside Story of the Mines, the Markets, the Politics, the Investors</i> [Richard West]
HARRIS, JOHN	<i>William Tatham: Mowbray Archibald</i> [J. M. Richards]
HATTERLEY, ROY	<i>Politics Apart</i> [Alan Brownjohn]
HODDER, IAN	<i>Symbols in Action: Ethnoarchaeological studies of material culture</i> [P. J. Ucko]
HODDER, IAN, and others (Editors)	<i>Pottery of the Past: Studies in honour of David Clarke</i> [P. J. Ucko]
HUME, IVOR NOEL	<i>Martin's Hundred</i> [David B. Quinn]
HUMPHRIES, S. C., and KINO, HELEN (Editors)	<i>Mortality and Immortality: the anthropology and archaeology of death</i> [David Ridgway]
JOSIFOVICH, OMBREL	<i>Writing and the Body: The Northcliffe Lectures, 1981</i> [Dennis Donehue]
JUO, DENIS, and SLINN, PETER	<i>The Evolution of the Modern Commonwealth, 1902-80</i> [H. S. Ferns]
KUST, J. M.	<i>The Nichols File of the Gentleman's Magazine</i> [Brian Yickers]
LAKEMAN, ENIO	<i>Power to Elect: The Case for Proportional Representation</i> [David Butler]
LEQUIN, FRANK	<i>Het Personeel van de vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Azië in de Achttiende eeuw, meer in het bijzonder in de vestiging Bengalen</i> [C. R. Boxer]
LENOIR-ODIERMAN, ANDRÉ	<i>The Dawn of European Art: An Introduction to Palaeolithic Cave Painting</i> [P. J. Ucko]
LUBOMIRSKI, EUGENIUSZ	<i>Korci z mego zycia</i> [Norman Stone]
MAIDEN, FREDERICK, and FLOHOUSE, D. K. (Editors)	<i>Oxford and the Idea of Commonwealth: Essays presented to Sir Edgar Williams</i> [H. S. Ferns]
MORRIS, ROGER	<i>Half: The General's Progress</i> [Max Beloff]
G'KEEFE, DANIEL LAWRENCE	<i>Stolen Lightning: The Social Theory of Magic</i> [Robert Irwin]
PAGDEN, ANTHONY	<i>The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the origins of comparative ethnology</i> [Henry Kamen]
PASOLINI, PIER PAOLO	<i>Amado mio e Atti Impari</i> [David Robey]
PAULSON, RONALD	<i>Literary Landscape: Turner and Constable</i> [John Barrell]
POWELL, NEIL	<i>A Season of Cold Weather</i> [Tim Dooley]
ROBERTSON, PHILLIP	<i>An Experience of Women: Pattern and Change in Nineteenth-Century Europe</i> [Angeline Goreau]
ROGERS, KATHERINE M.	<i>Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England</i> [Angeline Goreau]
ROWLAND, CHRISTOPHER	<i>The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity</i> [Michael Knibb]
RYAN, MICHAEL	<i>Marxism and Deconstruction</i> [Christopher Norris]
SIMPSON, MARY	<i>Making Arrangements</i> [William Scammell]
SNOW, PHILIP	<i>Stranger and Brother: A Portrait of C. P. Snow</i> [D. A. N. Jones]
VINCE, MICHAEL	<i>In the New District</i> [Tim Dooley]
WATKIN, DAVID	<i>Athenian Stuart: Pioneer of the Greek Revival</i> [J. M. Richards]
WATKIN, DAVID	<i>The English Vision: The Picturesque in Architecture, Landscape and Garden Design</i> [J. Mordaunt Crook]
WHYTE, IAIN BOYD	<i>Brinsford and the Architecture of Activism</i> [Reyner Banham]
WILMER, CLIVE	<i>Devotions</i> [Tim Dooley]
ZAMOYSKI, ADAM	<i>Paderewski</i> [Norman Stone]
COMMENTARY	
Cloppa, E. T. (Various cinemas)	[S. Schoenbaum]
Opera	György Ligeti: <i>Le Grand Macabre</i> (London Coliseum) [Paul Driver]
Television	Samuel Beckett Season (BBC 2) [Peter Kemp]
Theatre	Shakespeare: <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> (Cottesloe Theatre) [Ronald Hayman]
	ALAN AYCKBOURN: <i>A Trip to Scarborough</i> (Theatre in the Round, Scarborough) [Hugh Houghton]
American Notes	[Christopher Hitchens]
Author	Fifty years on
Presented by	C. J. Driver, George MacBeth, James Michie and Peter Redgrove
Letters on	Professing Literature: Venable Stanley, George Orwell
Among	the great

BIOGRAPHY AND POLITICS

EUGENIUSZ LUBOMIRSKI
Korci z mego zycia
199p. Polska Fundacja Kulturalna,
9 Gdansk Road, London W14.
£9.90.

ADAM ZAMOYSKI
Paderewski
299p. Collins. £12.95.
000716642 9

Prince Eugeniusz Lubomirski, who died at an advanced age in 1982, was a prominent figure in the Polish community in this country—a grandee, of whom legends were spoken. It was said that he had a homing instinct for this country's troubles, and that he had survived a whole set of experiences which would have knocked lesser men flat. The first version I heard of his life made out, even, that he had been on the Titanic, had been through the Russian Revolution, and had been a stock-broker on Wall Street in 1929. This version is inaccurate in fact, though not so inaccurate in spirit. The volume of memoirs that has appeared posthumously (excellently edited by Kazimierz Zadachowski) makes this clear. It is an extraordinary story.

Prince Eugeniusz was born to one of the great Polish families, with connections throughout Europe. He was born in 1885, and lived most of his early years in or near Cracow, in Austrian Poland; his father, a keen musician, spent a great deal of time in Vienna, and did good for young musicians there. The family was well-off, for it inherited something from a relative who had made a killing in Canada's sugar trade; there was a large estate near Orsha, on the borders of White Russia and the Ukraine. Because of this, the young Eugeniusz was sent to St Petersburg to learn Russian. He abandoned his studies there when there were rumours of war in July 1914—indeed, he travelled on the last peace-time train to cross the border between Russia and Austria, and heard the railway-bridge exploding just behind him as the Russians blew it up.

He was not required to do Austrian service, for he did not wish to die at other Poles in different uniforms. Allowance of Spain was a family friend, and Spanish passports were obtained to leave the Lubomirskis out of things. He lived quietly in Vienna and then in Switzerland. However, the family money ran out as revenues ceased to flow from the Russian estate. In the spring of 1918 Eugeniusz travelled to Cracow, then behind the German-Bolshevik line of demarcation, to see if he could rescue at least the valuable library. The venture failed; instead, he was arrested by marauding Bolsheviks, and escaped only by jumping the train while his guards were sleeping. Family connections in the new Poland of 1919, secured him a posting as secretary to the Polish embassy at Washington, and the next eight years were spent in the United States. In 1923-24, there was a change of ambassador, and Eugeniusz decided to try something practical. On the advice of Herbert Hoover he made for business in Wall Street.

Something of a veil of decency is drawn, in the memoirs, over what went on; but like all the best veils, it gives a good idea of what lies beneath. In America, "the title of prince had no great magical effect": at Chicago, when he travelled there on business, he was met at the station by crowds of "Polish" (by analogy with the Prince of Wales, who had just been there). He was taken off to a mayoral reception, and did not disclose his hosts. Herbert Hoover was there, sardonically letting proceedings go ahead. This was something of a Scott Fitzgerald world, of hitherto (many) yellow Rolls-Royces, and a list of acquaintances that included Al Capone, Alvin Karpis, and the Twenties—Rubinstein, Ziegfeld, Polka, Dink (Duff) Cooper, Andrew Mellon, many Vanderbilts. When he went back to Poland, in 1927, a number of his friends saw him at the station, and it was a close-run thing whether he did not stay behind and marry so happily. In the meantime, he worked on Wall Street—finding the

business of clocking in at 7.30 a considerable effort.

When he went back to Poland, he devoted his experience to managing a run-down family estate at Chodorow in eastern Galicia. He was obviously very good at it, for he succeeded in refloating the family finances in the slump even though he had to deal with a vulnerable commodity, sugar-beet. He had good relations with his workforce, and interested them directly in the business by giving them shares; there were never any problems with the large Ukrainian population of the Chodorow region, even though, in the 1930s, something of a war developed between Poles and Ukrainians. As he says, "I always had a certain knack for getting on with people of differing backgrounds and opinions".

Otherwise, life went on as well it might for a man of his position. He married an Austrian girl, Erika von Wolff, when he was almost forty, and lived the existence of a Galician magnate, with a constant stream of guests to the restored manor at Chodorow. The great centre of social life at that time was the Potocki palace at Laczut, where Count Alfred and his formidable mother, Bertka, held court—the process has been described in the Count's memoirs, *Master of Laczut*, one of the most famously unparaphrased (though Cecil Beaton had a good try) sets of memoirs ever composed. Mother, who was clearly a considerable dragon, prided herself on assembling European *prominenti*—the Duke and Duchess of Kent one week, Ribbentrop (whom she had known in his pompous-selling days) the next. Lubomirski himself describes an improbable encounter with Ribbentrop in the Laczut Turkish-bath—Ribbentrop expatiating on Hitler's greatness, and praising him for the strong nerves displayed at the Rhineland crisis in 1936. The Potockis were invited to Berlin for the Olympics in 1936, and—not heppily—met Hitler. Through his German contacts, Count Alfred was able to save a great deal from the wreck of 1945, and lived out sterile existence in Switzerland afterwards.

Lubomirski does not dwell much on the politics of the 1930s, but I doubt if he had any high opinion of the government. How did Poland manage to fall prey both to Germany and to Russia in 1939? Colonel Beck relied to the very last, on the assumption that Germans and Russians would never make an alliance at his expense. And yet, in the spring and summer of 1939, it became plain that such an alliance was not unthinkable: the signs are catalogued in Sidney Aster's *Making of the Second World War*. In Lubomirski's memoirs, another sign is revealed. He was told, in May 1939, by the editor of *Pester Lloyd* in Budapest, that German-Soviet discussions were proceeding at Ankara. Baroness von Gager, the sister-in-law of Papen, the German ambassador in Turkey, wrote to Lubomirski's wife that she had heard, over bridge with relatives to Merano, that such a pact was forthcoming. Lubomirski took the letter to Warsaw, and was told it was nonsense.

Lubomirski had been politically naïf. Beck's illusions. When war came, German aircraft bombed the Chodorow region because it lay close to the main line from Warsaw to Bucharest, and the Lubomirskis escaped towards the east, to a Potocki estate at Pomorzany. There, they were overtaken by the Soviet invasion, and Lubomirski was arrested. It was the beginning of two years spent in Soviet prisons and a camp in the far North. The description of these two years forms the centre-piece of this book, and even temperedly goes through a hellish odyssey, Lubomirski's class origins condemned him to Soviet eyes; worse still, he was regarded as a spy because of his diplomatic passport and its many visas. There followed never-ending interrogations, hunger, freezing cold, and "work" which was so badly managed that Lubomirski himself volunteered to sort things out on a sensible basis. For the offence of trying to make contact with a friendly fellow-prisoner, he was condemned to

Norman Stone

a punishment cell: he was made to walk up and down for forty-eight hours at a stretch, and the lavatory-bucket had spikes driven into it so that he could not sit down even there. At one moment, he was taken off to a cell where two NKVD men pulled out revolvers and placed them at his forehead to make him talk. He himself reckons that, if he had shown fear, he would have been killed at once, but, with great presence of mind, he held out, and refused to make the absurd allegations against fellow-Poles which were required of him, or to work for the NKVD against the Ukrainians. He survived the whole thing because of the companionship of the prisoners, and the quality of black humour that he, along with other and later prisoners, developed inside the system of Gulag. He was kept in food and cigarettes for some time because the commandant of a prison took a fancy to his ragged, monogrammed underpants, and bought them from him for 100 rubles.

In the meantime, he had word of his wife only very late in the day, through fellow-prisoners who had news of her. She had managed to escape from the Soviet zone to Cracow. Although she was of Austrian origin, and so could have registered as *rekhsdeutsch* with all of the attendant privileges, she refused to abandon her Polish loyalties, and used the family house in central Cracow to put up everyone and anybody—her contacts with decent Germans doing good service when it came to helping out Poles who were on the run. Eventually, she struggled away from Cracow to rejoin her husband in 1945.

In June 1941, Lubomirski was once more put into a prison, this time the camp-prison at Kniaz Pokost, on the grounds that he was a spy. The accusation rested on his having predicted the German attack on Russia already at Kiev, in 1940; when the attack duly came, Lubomirski found himself in the camp isolator. It was only because he managed to pass messages through a fellow-prisoner that his whereabouts became known to the Polish diplomats now attempting to cooperate with Soviet Russia. A special intervention by General Anders led to his being freed, in October, and he arrived in Moscow. He travelled with his warders on the metro, was interrogated once more, and was taken to see Beria himself; his contact with the NKVD ended, surreptitiously, with an invitation to see *Swan Lake* from Barlo's box at the Bolshoi. From then on, he served as Anders's assistant; cleverly, he was used as interpreter at a press conference given by the Moscow Poles, for Lubomirski, who had lost more than half of his weight to his experiences, and was very obviously an ex-zek, could tell the full story simply by remaining silent. His memoirs end with a description of the Polish armed

forces, first in Russia, then in Persia, and finally in Italy. For any historian of the Polish cause in the Second World War, what he has to say of the divisions between Sikorski, Anders and ambassador Kot (who wished for an accommodation with Stalin) is important.

Adam Zamoyski's book on Paderewski describes a much happier, more hopeful Poland. It is a shrewd and lively account, the first solidly informed and reliable one, of a life that almost constitutes the last gasp of 1848 and its romantic revolution: for Ignacy Jan Paderewski also managed, like so many Poles, to earn an enormous amount into his life—as composer, concert-pianist, and finally as a picturesquely muddled politician.

Paderewski was one of these indestructible old rocks that Europe—for some reason, especially the Third Republic—used to produce in quantity. He was born in 1860, near Zlitchin in the western Ukraine; like the Anglo-Irish gentry in the same period, he was part of a culture on the run, in that the Polish influence on the Ukraine was becoming weaker with every passing year. There was no question of his becoming attached to the Russian, far less the Ukrainian cause—in New York, much later on, he talked French to Rachmaninoff, not Russian, although he could handle Russian very well—and so he became something of a hanger-on to "Polishness", trading off that well-known combination of woe-begone *grandezza* and sexuality that had western Europe, particularly France, enthralled since the days of Balzac—himself a notorious victim of the combination.

Paderewski inherited from somewhere—Zamoyski cannot be specific—the extraordinary musicality of the western provinces of Tsarist Russia, to which we owe so many almost untutored but brilliant Jewish violinists. He more or less taught himself the piano from a honky-tonk; until he reached Vienna (where he was taught by the great Leschetizky), his only teachers were birds of rare passage, or sub-Germanic pedants at the Warsaw Conservatoire, who had no faith in Paderewski's future. Much of his early youth was spent as a travelling musician straight out of Gogol: evenings with the provincial governor, toes sticking out of boots, playing out-of-tune instruments to an audience of numbskulls who wore tight with their pennies. He was traded upwards on the links of the Polish aristocracy: he was sent to Vienna, and prospered there through Czartoryska and Potocki. From there, via Strasbourg (where, at the academy, he preceded the young Gieseking), he gravitated to Paris and performed his Polish trick. Paderewski concerts succeeded in a way that can seldom have been matched, for he had the

look and the technique to launch a sort of *Gesamtkunstwerk* that supplied Proust with instances of Madame de Verdurin musical "hype": in fact Paderewski had a notorious affair with the Princess Brancovan, who supplied the chief model for Madame de Cambremer.

The old Paderewski recordings do not somehow quite work. There is too much bravura stuff; there are too many wrong notes. Clearly, the whole performance depended very much on Paderewski's own appearance, which had the ladies enthralled—and not only the ladies, for Robert de Montesquiou said of him, "under the hair of a cleverly-toussed Maccasio, the tormented visage of a Luelfer". His model was, of course, Liszt, and it was at Liszt and Schumann that he excelled, and into which he put a demonic power that nowadays can probably be found only in Svyatoslav Richter (himself born not far from Paderewski, though of German, rather than Polish, origin).

Paderewski exploited his capacities to the full. He took over Paris mid-afternoon, London. Then, in the early 1890s, he tackled the United States. Zamoyski has some lengthy, knowledgeable, and very funny paragraphs on this. Paderewski ruined a tendon while teckling a badly-tuned instrument, and it was a terrible pain for him to play. None the less, he went on to fill all engagements, and lie away with extraordinary sums of money—\$95,000 in 1891, \$160,000 in 1893, \$280,000 in 1895. Success did not go to his head, for he went on practising and practising, absorbing everything that Leschetizky had taught him: there was a combination of nerve and occasional inaccuracy that audiences, in these blessed days, were prepared to enthuse over.

His reputation all over the world was such that he became the travelling representative of Poland. His instincts were all on the right side, for he was *dreyfusard*, pro-Allyed, and patriotic in a wholly non-party sense. It was his money that created the Oranwald Monument in Cracow, in 1910, to commemorate the Poles' victory over the Teutonic Knights. He was quite clever at managing people (in Lubomirski's memoirs, he figures as an excellent bridge-player) and he steered President Wilson towards recognition of independent Poland before it, in fact, existed and although a great many upper-class Poles were busy collaborating with the Germans. Still, although Paderewski's was a worldly-wise name, he was not a successful statesman. He became Poland's representative at Versailles, and for a brief space, Prime Minister. The task was far too much for him, for he could not easily absorb the atmosphere of Versailles, and he was unable to answer arguments that left Danzig—with fatal effect—a Free City. As Prime Minister, he was a terrible, wife-dominated muddler, for he was easily bored, and there was much about the role that was boringly technical: it was a rather characteristic dilemma of the new Poland that the man whose presence and contacts were required to launch it would also turn out to be, in practical matters, "a merchant of trumpery of the will" is so appalling muddler, to whom the problems of knitting together a prussia composed of chunks of Austria, Prussia and Russia were unmanageable. He speedily resigned, and retired to his villa near Lausanne, Riond-Bosson (which had been built, originally, for the wife of Fouché).

In time, money became a problem, for he never could resist a good, or a bad, cause. He entertained lavishly (lobsters in vintage champagne were the Paderewski special) and to pay for it all, went touring again in the 1920s and '30s. He travelled with a vast entourage, as far as Tasmania and New Zealand; probably, for the journey would be dropped out with enormous difference by armies of secretaries, after which the great man would perform. He died only in 1941. Paderewski brought off the very difficult feat of starting as *Wunderkind* and ending as grand old man, and Adam Zamoyski's biography does "definitive" justice to both sides. There is much to be said for being brought up in a harsh world.

The Last Wasp

When light dims to an early blur
Which makes me dream I'm going blind;
When the last wasp, colourless fur,
Blends with the carpet; when I find
Soles chilled by linoleum, the moon
Rotten and low, and bonfire smoke
Perplexing the late afternoon
With tears that irritate and choke;
When mist with riotous breath
Doodles on windows notes for death;
When with a histrionic sigh
The year turns its face to the wall
Of whiter and pretends to die,
Then is the time I like to call
In bluff, and either counter-attack
By rushing into love and work
Or take the long, muddy slog back
Through memory: Either way, the jerk
Of one or the other blustering roper
Tightens and lifts some flag of hope.

James Michie

Materializing the spiritual

Denis Donoghue

GABRIEL JOSIPOVICI

Writing and the Body: The Northcliffe Lectures, 1981
142pp. Brighton: Harvester. £15.95.
0 7108 0495 4

Writing and the Body is the text, somewhat enlarged, of the Northcliffe Lectures for 1981 which Gabriel Josipovici delivered at University College London. The theme, which he says eluded him till he found a name for it at last, is still elusive. I congratulate anyone who made head or tail of the Lectures on a first hearing.

Josipovici's aim was "to examine the role which language, writing and books play in our lives, the lives we live with our bodies". Put like that, it begs more questions than those it proposes. Who are "we"? What justifies the reference to role-playing? What are the "lives we live with our bodies"? or rather, what is the force of that "with"? These questions are not released from boggery by Josipovici's assertion that writing and speaking "are at the crossroads of the mental, and the physical, the orders of culture and of nature". The figure is misleading. Writing and speaking are actions, a crossroads is the scene of a possible action.

The dualism of mind and body makes a problem for philosophers, but it has provided an opportunity for writers of a satirical or farcical talent. To the extent to which mind can be regarded as spiritual or aspiring, it can also be mocked, reduced to its physical correlations. In "The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit" Swift effected this reduction, offering ostensibly plausible bodily causes for high and mighty exaltations. The process of achieving the height of eloquence, for instance, was identified with the one employed in achieving, without external ministry, an orgasm. "The corruption of the senses is the generation of the spirit." If Louis XIV's brain is occupied by a certain vapour, the only question is: which way will it go? If it goes up, he spends years in war and conquest; if it goes down to his backside, the world is at peace and the King dies of a fistula.

Given mind and body, or even given the words "mind" and "body", the inventive possibilities are considerable. If, on a count of heads, writers tend to be idealists rather than Materialists, the reason is that words,

whatever the character of the abjects they denote, seem to be more mental or spiritual than material. This makes life hard for Materialists. Fredric Jameson has deplored "that instinctive idealism which characterizes the mind when it has to do with nothing but spiritual facts". Words are spiritual facts; which explains why some modern writers try to use them as if they weren't, making them opaque, as if the words were material things. Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* complicates the issue, if once you take it seriously; or his marginal answer to Reynolds, which refuses the dualism: "Imagination is the Divine Body in Every Man".

Josipovici rarely invokes Blake, but he certainly has an interest in forcing literature and criticism out of the instinctive idealism to which Jameson refers. In *The Lessons of Modernism* (1977) he described a Brechtian theatre:

Such a theatre rediscovers words, but as the expression of the total body rather than of consciousness. In an *Fuoco* or a *Pinter* play, for example, speech has a far more important function than in Ibsen or Shaw. For speech is used not to impart information or express views, but as a weapon or shield, as an extension of the arm or the chest, an instrument of survival or aggression.

This is a misreading of Shaw and Ibsen, whose characters speak, no less than those in the plays of Ionesco and Pinter, to defend themselves or attack others. But the important part of the passage is Josipovici's distinction between consciousness and "the total body". The distinction is vague in itself, but clear enough as indicating Josipovici's desire to render the separation of mind and body null in critical and rhetorical practice, even if it persists in strict theory. In *Writing and the Body*, as in *The Lessons of Modernism* and *The World and the Book* (1971) he tries to enhance the body, as if by invoking "the total body", whatever that means, he could assign to the otherwise mundane body all the spiritual powers and attributes anybody could possibly want. Speaking of the silences that come between Othello's words, he says that "they are that out of which the words naturally spring and to which they return: they are his body, the totality of his being". In a somewhat grandiloquent reference to the novel, he says that it provides a universal language: "not in the words, not in the story, not in the book as an object, but in the book as it is read: a living body".

The total body receives intense rhetorical stress in *Writing and the Body*, but not much explication. I have to contrast it, in that respect, with the patient argument and elucidation the question of mind and body has received from Jane Jonas in *The Phenomenon of Life*, especially in the chapter "Life, Death, and the Body in the Theory of Being", which is a more helpful meditation on the coincidence of inwardness and outwardness in the body. Jonas's purpose and Josipovici's are not, indeed, identical, but they have enough common ground to show that, on such a theme, recourse to rhetorical stress and italics is not good enough.

Some of the analogies between writing and the body are easy. If, like Josipovici, you think of creativity as "the making of something, not the expression of an emotion", you can say that the artist "puts his material together for the sheer pleasure of it, and any relation it may have with the rest of the world is purely coincidental". You can also say that what is important about the artist's work "is not that he makes an object or plays a game, but the sense he conveys of the act of making itself". I wish I could find those statements useful, or that they help me to distinguish between making a poem, a meal, or anything else. "At basis", Josipovici says, "all writing is the metamorphosis of the hand into the infinite variety which constitutes letters, words, sentences"; but it may also constitute doodling or calligraphy. In a lecture mainly on *Tristram Shandy*, Josipovici says that "the impotence and failure which blights all the characters is reduplicated at the level of the narrative". That is, *Tristram* can't write his "Life and Opinions". But impotence is not at issue, it is the comedy of postponements, interruptions, and digressions that holds the book together. Frustration is not the same as impotence. Josipovici has a better case in comparing Sterne's narrative method with strip-teasing; and in regarding *Tristram Shandy* as "a way of deflecting sexuality and making it manageable".

Body-language is not Josipovici's concern; nor are his lectures to be received as notes towards a physiology of style. Such a thing may be possible. William Carlos Williams thought that writers could be differentiated by their breath-lengths, and he offered his own triple-measures as having more to do with respiration than with the counting of syllables or stresses. E. M. Cioran has proposed a physiological explanation of Saint-Simon's prose: "his breath, its cadence, even its catches, imposed that fluid and ample movement which surmounts the solitude and the barrier of words." La Bruyere, by contrast, is short-winded; hence "the lineaments of his thought are distinct, he prefers to remain within rather than transcend his nature". Again, a physiology of style would encourage us to regard exorbitances not as vices of style - a Renaissance rebuke - but as diseases. Think of the diseases which would correspond, say, to Carlyle's style in *Sartor Resartus*, or to Chesterton's style in everything. Josipovici emphasizes Kafka's need to define "the precise relations between food and words", and he refers to anorexia nervosa, quoting Canetti's observation that Kafka's most profound tendencies are "to become smaller and smaller, more and more silent, lighter and lighter, till the final annihilation".

The difficulty of *Writing and the Body* arises not only from the elusiveness of its theme but from a disproportion, in Josipovici's account of it, between illustrative matter and the object it is supposed to illustrate. Josipovici is like a novelist who is long on characterization but short on plot. Much of his discourse has only a tenuous bearing upon its official theme, and therefore has interest mainly intrinsic. The lecture on Shakespeare would be illuminating in any context, but is not especially appropriate to the relations between writing and the body. There are passages on Sterne, Kafka, Borges, Eliot, Beckett, and Muriel Spark which read now like improvisations, however they sounded in University College London, two years ago; they float free from their context. Some of their details, however, are so perceptive that I could easily be persuaded to forget the context and any misgivings I have about it.

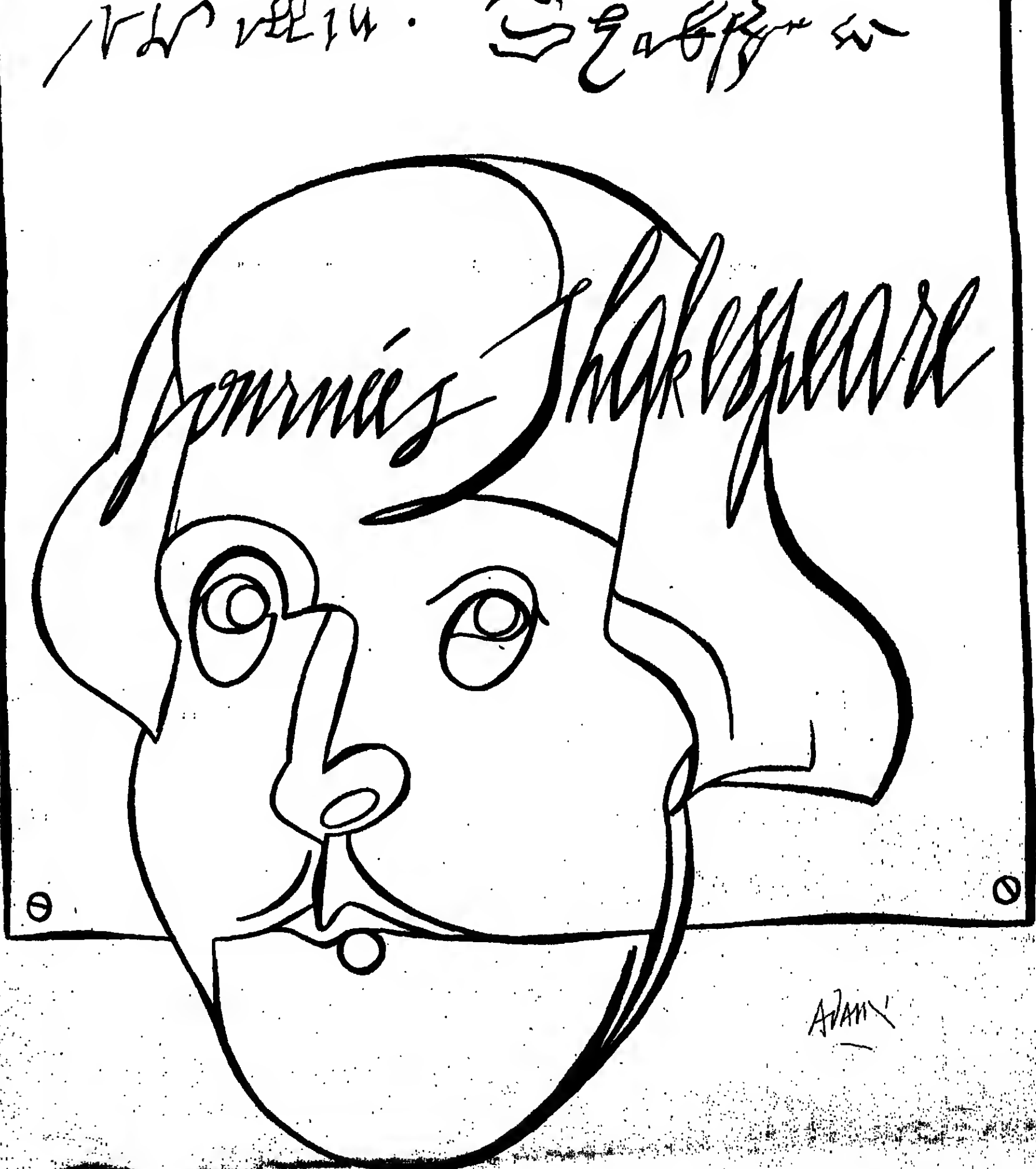
There is no evidence that Josipovici, like *Tristram*, has diverted himself from telling his "Life and Opinions"; he ends every lecture on a ringing phrase. But it is hard to discover what, in the end, he wants the reader to do:

are we required to change our lives? The story has a moral, it is nearly as elusive as the theme. I can find two brief passages which are separated by nearly a hundred pages. In the first, Josipovici says that Proust in the end remains faithful to his deepest insight: "that we are given back time by recognising that it is what we have passed". To avoid recognition of one's own body: in accepting the time to be given back the other. I'm not sure how to reconcile this with a later sentence, that "writing releases us helping us to avoid the acceptance of our bodies". But to any case, later still Josipovici seems to commit himself to what he calls "trust", for which he image he gives is Kafka, in his final illness in Kierling, unable to speak still scribbling notes to Doris Bryne Robert Klopstock, and others in notes are extraordinary; images, phrases, ellipses, Orpheus whatever they seemed at the time. Josipovici's description of it is a beautifully daring, the most touching thing in the book. He interprets Kafka's trust "in the soliloquy of the heart to keep moving forward over hope" as "finally, trust, against all the evidence, in the beneficial aspect of time. In movement as opposed to stasis". Beautiful, indeed. But Kafka hand isn't, except to a most educated sense of the word, a hand; it is, for time being, his character, his will, the resilience of his moral being. It comes back, in our sense of it, to "the total body", and to whatever each reader is willing to allow that, under the persuasion of Josipovici's rhetoric, amounts to.

It may be contended that a reader of *Writing and the Body* will find Josipovici's references to the total body, in any of its versions, whatever allowance the phrases need at the time. Doesn't the reader of "Ash Wednesday" give Eliot the benefit of any doubt that clings to

The time. Redem
The unread vision in the higher dream
But "Ash Wednesday", by the time we reach those lines, has suggested or enforced a context sufficiently stable, irrefutably there as the scene of certain images and rhythms. Josipovici meditations have their own exaltation, but not enough, by way of an ending or persuasive context, to make the reader complete for himself the meaning Josipovici has hardly begun to incite.

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Undoing the dialectic

Christopher Norris

MICHAEL RYAN

Marxism and Deconstruction
232pp. Johns Hopkins University Press. £14.
0 8018 2752 3

The Yale deconstructionists have lately come in for some hostile treatment at the hands of Marxist critics: who have attacked what they see as the deconstructionists' total lack of historical context, their cult of linguistic play, and their failure to take account of Western materialist conditions. Single giants and lineages, deconstruction all the way (from Plato to NATO). Deconstruction, for these Marxists is merely the latest and most desperate ploy of a rearguard liberal humanism forced to recognize its own historical impotence and driven to ever more farcical extremes of protective mystification.

The deconstructionists - taking their cue from Derrida - counter these charges by arguing that Marxist criticism has yet to develop a textual awareness sufficiently alert to the identity of its own motives in the "own" constitution. A genuine encounter can only take place when the text of dialectical materialism has been subjected to the full rigour of deconstructive reading. Until then there must remain a "dialectic" that much of what passes for "materialist thought" is still deeply implicated in the

logocentric closure, or régime of metaphysical truth, which Derrida equates with the Western intellectual tradition at large.

Michael Ryan's book is a determined and often convincing attempt to break the current deadlock. He argues that deconstruction should only be seen as a threat to certain kinds of Marxist dogmatism, habits of thought which positively need undermining if Marxism is to be saved from its own most harmful and self-destructive tendencies. The practical implications of Ryan's argument extend far beyond the kind of hermetic theorizing often indulged in by the proponents of "American" deconstruction. Where Marxist dogmatism stands to gain is in questioning those forms of "presumptive" historical knowledge and power - those "perceptions of materialist dialectic" which have worked to destroy its radical potential. Chief among these, in Ryan's view, is the Soviet instance of "totalitarian" betrayal through the "systematic" repression of "marginal" checks and "resistances". It is he who reads the practical outcome of tyranny of reason, self-blinded to its own constitutive limits and inward contradictions. Soviet bureaucracy is the working-out in historical terms of a deep theoretical impasse which marks the very discourse of Leninist revolutionary theory.

Ryan challenges a socialist order which would take this reason to heart by rejecting the terms of those

structured oppositions vital to the maintenance of centralized power. Deconstruction offers precisely such a means of critical leverage, serving to demonstrate how certain concepts achieve theoretical mastery only at the cost of incessantly repressing other, supposedly "secondary" themes. What is in question is not a species of textual fixation devoid of political substance or effect, but a highly specific and potentially transformative practice of historical understanding.

Ryan's arguments proceed on two main fronts. On the one hand he criticizes Marxist theory and practice for their habit of creating rigid hierarchical structures or exclusive oppositions, as between "theory" and "practice", "mental" and "material", labour, economic "base" and socio-political "superstructure". In each case the effect is to reduce a complex and heterogeneous reality to the terms of a one-track dialectical reason, a concept of "historical" process working to exclude all challenge to its centralized authority and power. On the other hand he applies this same technique to the various rhetorical gambits used to legitimize such "bourgeois-liberal" concepts as private versus public enterprise, or freedom within a market economy as opposed to the constraints of state intervention.

Such loaded dichotomies are, for Derrida, the root substrates of all metaphysical thought. For Ryan they represent not only a species of linguistic bewitchment but also the very stuff of which ideologies are made. To deconstruct them is to show

like Derrida, that they rest on an imaginary opposition, the terms of which are not exclusive but subject to a constant reciprocal play of interdefinition. Thus for instance, "free enterprise" and private wealth must always be dependent on the maintenance of an economy - a more or less stable currency of value - which in turn requires "public" (or state) control. What the rhetoric conceals is precisely this taint of "outside" intervention which creates the very ground and possibility of "freedom" as conceived in ideological terms.

Ryan draws on two main examples to give some idea of what a socialist politics might actually amount to if freed from the dead hand of centralized power. One is the radical feminist movement which challenges a patriarchal Marxist tradition by refusing to accept its own "marginal" status as defined by the prevalent (male-dominated) concepts of historical necessity. Feminism, according to Ryan, "sees consciousness as multiple and contradictory, not as a locus of absolute truth and power". His other practical inspiration is the Italian "Autonomy" movement, one of whose slogans - as Ryan reports - is taken from Derrida: "the margin is at the center". These instances are both seen as entering a powerful deconstructive leverage in the form of radicalized socialist "planning" embodied in Leninist precept and practice.

Ryan's book is a powerful riposte, both to Marxist who revile deconstruction for its supposed liberal, bourgeois quietism, and to those

among the current deconstructionists who seem to invite that charge. Its arguments provide the basis for a new and productive encounter between Marxist dialectic and those Derridean themes which have so far engendered only a series of skirmishing polemical replies. Ryan repeatedly makes the point that in deconstructing texts one is also and inseparably deconstructing the practical effects which follow from a partial or distorted reading. Ryan's book deserves careful reading by those who have dismissed deconstruction as a self-indulgent romp, a gear-d-up variant of the "New Criticism" invented to keep the mills of academe grinding. On the positive side, it points a way beyond the current (post-Althusserian) stalemate in Marxist theoretical activity. Deconstruction challenges precisely those forms of "ideological" dogmatism and conceptual closure which have lately created the problems for Althusser's disciples. The present book is all the more timely and valuable for its clear-headed treatment of these issues.

James Joyce: *A Guide to Reading* (412pp. New York: Garland, \$20.00, 0 8240 9383 6), prepared by Thomas Jackson Rice, includes bibliographies of Joyce's publications (first and most recent editions), and collections of posthumously published manuscripts, the correspondence, the concordances and glossaries for his various secondary bibliographies, and an appendix on major foreign-language publications about Joyce.

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Significant terrain

John Barrell

RONALD PAULSON

Literary Landscape: Turner and Constable

274pp, with 83 black-and-white illustrations. Yale University Press. £15. 0 300 02804 0

The path from Hogarth, through Rowlandson and over the dizzying range of painters and genres discussed in *Emblem and Expression*, has led Ronald Paulson to this consideration of Turner and Constable, and he clearly relishes the challenge. For not only are they "by all odds the two greatest painters that England has produced", but they cannot be understood by the means of interpretation that Paulson developed in relation to Hogarth, whose works ask to be read, and aspire to closed meanings. Landscape, in the period when it was being detached from history, portraiture, subject or merely topographical painting, and by reason of "the fluidity and flexibility of shapes, colors and representations" it allows, offered the means for "the great breakthrough from objective to subjective art", inexhaustibly open to interpretation. The breakthrough was great, it seems to Paulson, in proportion to the size of the barriers to be broken through, the rubble of the "literary" painting of the eighteenth century and earlier, where landscape was paintable only as a background for human activity, or as a commentary on the human condition. It was in England that the breakthrough was made, and where the need for it was most urgent: for in England there was almost impossible to avoid the "verbal-conceptual" as a mediator between painters and the natural world.

In the two principal sections of this book, Paulson examines the struggles of Turner and Constable towards what he sometimes describes as "pure" landscape, though as he would surely agree, landscape is never that, and "subjective" indicates better the nature of his concern. He is, as he admits, much more excited by Constable's struggle than by Turner's. For "the limmer Turner" disguises the private meanings of his painting by the superscription of "graffiti"—visual puns, tags, titles—which direct our attention to the academic and moral aspects of his works, to the "fallacies of hope" they are cloaked to represent, and so away from their most

revolutionary aspect, the energy of the paint, which may be suspected of containing meanings that required to be concealed—in particular, the hubris of the man who identified with the sun, dared to look at its face, and called it his god.

We register the breakthrough in Turner in spite of his efforts to hide it. But for Constable the struggle was harder, because he was more determined to win, and because he understood landscape as a much less "fluid" subject that it was for Turner: the imperative in Constable, to map out a terrain, to demonstrate the shapes, sizes and meeting-points of fields, hills, woods, was at odds with his need to use his landscapes also as the carriers of personal meaning which, in later years, he so determinedly made them—by ruins ("a symbol... of myself"), and by the extravagant chiaroscuro and interpretative letterpress of his mezzotint collection, *English Landscape Scenery*. But such superscriptions, rather as with Turner, may have worked to hide the primary places of meaning in his work, between the dark staffage of the foreground and the distant, sunlit meadow, between landscape as whole and as part-object, between the visual and the verbal—finally resolved, Paulson suggests, in the late paintings of Hampstead Heath.

That is the theme of *Literary Landscape*: the detail of the argument, however, is another matter, and it would take a review rather longer than the book itself to attempt a criticism of that. For, as in *Emblem and Expression*, his interpretation and contextualization of the artists he discusses is striking in its range and suggestiveness, and sometimes also in its mistakes: for example, it was Gainsborough, not Constable, who regarded Sandby as the "only Man of Genius" to work as a topographical painter, and Constable's friend John Fisher did not buy "The Hay-Wain". There are passages here full of the most acute insight; a rich discussion of the meanings of the sun in early nineteenth-century England; an eloquent account of how Constable's work is charged with topographical information, a most thoughtful discussion of *English Landscape Scenery*, some perceptive analysis of Wilson's compositional structures, of the different qualities of light in Turner and Constable, and a great deal more. But for all that, this is not one of Paulson's more distinguished performances, and for two main reasons.

Thus, if Constable describes his love of dew and breezes and also of old rotten banks, he is not therefore saying that the "basic qualities of an 'English landscape' are 'dewy freshness and rottenness', whatever the convenience of believing he does. If he says that the origin of landscape painting, now 'a distinct branch of the art', was in history painting, that does not mean that he "rationalized" his own landscapes by "a theory of the absent history figure" with "its effects remaining on the landscape". What does it mean to say that the spectator must regard Turner's works from a distance "to avoid being blinded"? Or to announce that patches of fire in these landscapes represent "other suns", however much fun we can then have with all the delicious and ready-

The interpretations of Turner and Constable are almost entirely in psychological and psychosexual terms: the preoccupation which Paulson rightly sees in English landscape with the "literary"—the moral, the social, the religious, the political—is treated just as superscription on paintings that would otherwise speak only too clearly about the psyche and sexuality of their makers. Criticism for Paulson, has become entirely the discovery of the hidden, and only the psychosexual is hidden; the social, the political, the religious, it seems, are things one is always aware of, and function only as repressive, or as displacements of the private. He has no notion of ideology, of the moral and political meanings that may also be hidden in a landscape. Constable, he says, was "simply not much concerned with people"—a strange remark from a critic who believes that so much is at stake in Constable's "theory" of landscape as a depopulated history; and a strange lack of concern for Paulson of all people to leave unanalysed.

But what Paulson doesn't say is less worrying than what he does. The main difficulty of representing the argument of this book is not just a result of its range, but of the difficulty of understanding how it proceeds. Paulson has a gift for uncovering problems, and for suggesting explanations for them—but why some such explanations are included in his argument, and others are excluded, is often impossible to determine, and pursuit of his train of thought is delayed and waylaid by a host of similar hazards: a tendency to make Constable's utterances mean much more than they say; a habit of arguing through metaphors not clearly recognized as such.

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"Woman Milking", a drawing by Rubens, c 1615-18, now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Besançon, reproduced from Lisa Vergara's Rubens and the Poetics of Landscape (207pp, with 121 plates. Yale University Press. £27. 0 300 02508 4), to be reviewed in a later issue of the TLS.

made structural oppositions the metaphor brings along with it?

Or—and this is a crucial example, on which turns Constable's "solution" to the opposing demands of the visual and verbal—take the dunghill that appears in "The Stour Valley and Dedham Church" of 1815. In that painting, Paulson believes, Constable had found a way of relating foreground and background in georgic terms which had also the potential to mediate the psychosexual anxieties that his pictures reveal and conceal. The foreground dunghill being carried off to be spread on the distant fields, to fertilize them, while the composition still acknowledges the dunghill as blocking our path to the distance, and as (at least) an independently pleasurable alternative. The Hampstead paintings, Paulson believes, may achieve a similar mediation. We may agree that the dunghill is an image of fertility, and

also that it has a formal similarity to the sand-banks that appear in the paintings of Branch Hill Pond, but formal similarity is not therefore a functional identity, and a sand-bank is not therefore an image of fertility, certainly not for an artist as concerned with agricultural information as Constable. It is not therefore simply "muck-heap", as Paulson keeps calling it, but a sand-bank, whose use (Paulson admits) is to build houses and not to manure fields. Constable, says Paulson, could not "restrain" his "metaphorical activity of his mind", but the lack of restraint may be Paulson's before it is Constable's.

As in all Paulson's writings, there is great deal of intelligence in this book, and a great deal of work thinking about it, but much of it is on the margins of the argument, whose procedures are sometimes so strange as to question how it is an argument at all.

HISTORY

Under the old plantation

David B. Quinn

IVOR NOEL HUME

Martin's Hundred
343pp. Gallancz. £11.95.
0 375 03178 6

When I was teaching at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg in 1969-70, a frequent topic of conversation was the turn of the century Williamsburg Inc to turn the finely renovated plantation mansion, now called Carter's Grove, into the centre of a working plantation, and the snide remark about it was "Where will they get the slaves?" What we did not know was that Ivor Noel Hume was at work attempting to find traces of the subsidiary buildings, houses, barns, slave quarters and such which would give authenticity to the proposed new layout. Two seasons' work, we now know, revealed very few traces of this sort, but at various points, both inland from the house and especially towards the James River to the front of it, seventeenth-century artefacts appeared in unexpected quantities. The report was shelved, was taken out again only in 1976 and exploration resumed, and in his racy and informative narrative, Noel Hume says, wryly, "had we known the answer we might never have begun." But with exemplary patience Colonial Williamsburg let them begin, bore with their finding early seventeenth and eighteenth-century materials underground, and gave logistic support (though excavation money had to be found from other sources) until the project was brought to an end early in 1980.

The story of their search in *Martin's Hundred* is a chronological one, told with panache and from a fascinating

personal viewpoint: that of the archaeologist in the field, going from one site to another, one problem to another (not least being the weather), and finally making a coherent picture, bit by bit, of what was found and interpreted, guessing as Hume says as they went along, seeking advice, and usually, by pertinacity and scholarship, finding answers, if not always, perhaps, final ones. To get out a book this quickly is a feat few archaeologists manage. They usually sit on their finds too long, sometimes for ever. But, we are told, a dry-as-dust scientific report will follow in due course. This is however very much more than a mere trailer for such a report: it is a genuine contribution to knowledge, though much in the way of interpretation must come later.

A reviewer who is a historian, not an archaeologist, is in some difficulty in dealing with what is revealed here since it is for him largely a story told backwards, the later period excavations coming first, the earliest last. Briefly, Martin's Hundred was an offshoot of the Virginia Company's attempt to colonize Virginia for the first time with Englishmen. In 1618 the company began assigning unweaned grants of land to syndicates of investors, whose "particular plantations", as they were called, consisted of a capital-raising body in England, a manager, farmers and a well-equipped band of indentured labourers, who would obtain land from the local Council of Virginia and proceed to erect such buildings as they needed, so that on cleared land tobacco could be grown and native products such as assefafras, China root or whatever collected, and sent for profit to London.

All that was known about the location of the plantation was that it was some way to the south of Jamestown and on the river. Several

Alien beings

Henry Kamen

ANTHONY PAGDEN

The Fall of Natural Men: The American Indian and the origins of comparative ethnology
256pp. Cambridge University Press.
£14. 0 521 22202 8

The ambitious title of this book is somewhat deceptive, and Anthony Pagden himself admits in his excellent introduction that "much of the ground covered will be familiar" and that "I have attempted only to re-examine a group of familiar texts in terms of their intellectual context". Although he has read widely and deeply, therefore, he restricts his discussion to ground that has been very deeply ploughed by many other writers who have offered analyses of the impact of America on the Spanish mind. The major themes are here: the concept of a barbarian, the theory of natural slavery, the attitude of Las Casas. Going beyond these familiar subjects, Pagden offers what is in effect, a complete reinterpretation based on reference to the classical texts of Aristotle and the "authentic" contemporary reading of the words and concepts used by sixteenth-century writers. His philosophy is consequently more a work of history, concerned with the changing and volatile relationship between historical event and philosophical interpretation, than with the conceptual approach of a "natural" number of writers of the sixteenth century. This distinguishes his book from that of empirical writers like Francisco Guerra (whose *Indigenous Mind* is oddly absent from the bibliography) and from the wholly different writings of most modern Spanish commentators, whom Pagden criticizes for a failure to look beneath the words on the printed page. At the same time, however, he is somewhat open to disagreement. It is not evident to me, for example, that he uses the phrase "natural" correctly in the sixteenth-century context, and fails to take account of the widely accepted Ovidian

view of the nature of men living without society.

Apart from such details, however, Pagden's approach is singularly successful, and fully justifies his emphasis on the word "ethnology". His analysis of the Jurist Palesio Rubios is both original and lucid, and his presentation of Vitoria (basically a commentary on his *De Indis*) is the best I have seen in English, easily superseding the purely juridical version of Vitoria's views normally given by Hanke and by subsequent scholars. His summary makes it clear that many of the theologians discussing the nature of the American Indian did not rely only on a priori medieval principles, but were concerned to arrive at a practical and reasoned analysis. The principles of Aristotle were shifted, as he puts it, "from one path of Aristotelian psychology to another". Writers of the subsequent generation were influenced by this rethinking, and the American experience formed a staple part of any discussion on the nature and origin of human societies.

My impression is that Pagden is less successful when he enters the crowded Las Casas-Sepúlveda arena, and that his presentation of Sepúlveda is unfavourable (as against the much more balanced picture given recently by Fernández-Santamaría). His chief effort is spent on the Jesuit historian José de Acosta, who occupies nearly a quarter of the book. Acosta has never been adequately analysed in English, and what he is given here is an excellent survey. Since Acosta was a second-generation commentator (he died in 1600) and not a pioneer like Las Casas, his views were inevitably more mature and as a result more systematic. The pages on him are rewarding reading, though it would be useful to know how original Acosta's ideas were, and whether he shared his presuppositions with other Jesuits of the time or with other heirs of the Salamanca school. The varieties of opinion among sixteenth-century writers on America are all too often simplified into categories. Pagden has managed impressively, through this type of re-interpretation, and his work is well worth the way to a more extensive re-examination of the views of other commentators.

hundred people were installed in Wolstenholme Town (called after one of the principal financiers of the scheme) and agricultural production begun, though the settlers were no doubt subject to the high rate of mortality common to other groups. It was struck by the Indian rising of March 20, 1622, a blow from which never really recovered, some seventy-eight people being killed (a few of these may have been taken captive and later killed or released). The survivors ran away to Jamestown, but some came back when reinforcements and supplies arrived in 1623, though this time no roots were struck and within a few years the colonists melted away, until finally the grant was cancelled by the royal authorities in Virginia after the Virginia Company's demise. A few enterprising men came to farm near the fringes of the settlement but it was never occupied again.

Ivor Noel Hume left the Guildhall Museum (now the Museum of London) in 1956 to become director of archaeology for Colonial Williamsburg, and since then has had a commanding influence on archaeological work in North America, helping substantially to make historical archaeology there a discipline standing somewhere between History and Anthropology. His *Treasure from the Thames* (1953) gave some inkling of what he could do with bits and pieces. At Williamsburg, those bits and pieces have become a major research collection on every aspect of the material remains of eighteenth-century America and the Europe from which so many of them came. Hume has also built up a fine laboratory, renowned for its conservation techniques.

Without this backing he would have found it hard to make as much progress as he has done. The money for the excavations came at first from the National Foundation for the Humanities and then from the *National Geographic Magazine*. The latter bound him to sponsor bright and colourful articles on his progress (the artificial "colour" of which he restrained as much as possible), press conferences, televised views of the excavations and appearances, a film of much of the work in progress. This exposure brought news of the venture into millions of homes, and put a severe strain on the excavators, though their leader kept his cool on most occasions and proved a first-rate PR man, while struggling, on the whole, very successfully, to temper ballyhoo with truth and scholarship. To ignore this aspect would be to miss one important strand in the book, the exposure not only of the past but of their finds and finders to the public gaze.

The first site cleared was on the

landward side of Carter's Grove, and proved to belong to the period after 1622 and before about 1650. It was an individual household, surrounded at some distance from the house by a fence. It is thought to have been built by a man of substance, probably William Harwood who had headed Martin's Hundred and come back for a few years to take over part of its land when the settlers had gone (it was then occupied by one or two other persons up to about 1650). This was the practice site: it threw up, unexpectedly, some fine Virginia-made pottery, the earliest so far discovered, and sent the excavators hunting in the woods for the place where it was made. They did find a site with discarded fragments of armour and a good deal of pottery, including a piece dated 1631, but not the kiln. Archaeologically the pottery find was a valuable one.

It was not until the excavators moved into the land between Carter's Grove and the James River that what proved to be Martin's Hundred was slowly revealed. Here the surface soil was removed mechanically, though elsewhere (at St Mary's City in Maryland) surface analysis of the plough zone has provided, through computerization, valuable clues as to what lay underneath. For various reasons, mainly to do with time and money, this was not done here. In the case of an excavation where all buildings were made of wood, only postholes and other faint traces remain of what once had been habitations and other buildings. Meticulous tracing of all such markings made up the results of each season's dig, with graves and a shallow well as the only bonuses. These are shown in many diagrams essential to the narrative. A fort was found and delimited, its irregular shape presenting some difficulty to the excavators, but revealing that posts, some distant apart, with stout upright planks in between, formed the palisade, not the upright tree-trunks hitherto thought to have been used. The calculation of the firing step and the arrangement of the watchtower and bastion (as they were plotted) was difficult since so little was left. There then followed the finding of an enclosed area which had in it what had been storehouses and a dwelling: this was given the name of "the Company Compound". In it was a well and much pottery's waste, showing pottery had been made here between 1619 and 1622, along with many other artefacts. The next was another enclosure, this time dominated by what had been a large designated "the Company Enclosure". Finally, near the river a small domestic enclosure was uncovered. The main part of Wolstenholme Town was never found,

nor will be found. The James River carried it away as it eroded its bank and nothing remains even underwater, as searches showed.

It was the artefacts recovered which gave this site its publicity value and also a solid body of material, interesting or not to non-specialists, which will gradually yield much more information as it is digested and assembled. The long search to solve the mystery of the central line of nails which marked the coffin graves, took research in many parts of England and determined that gable-ridged coffins were used in this period. This was a piece of research of interest only to a detective archaeologist like Noel Hume. But the recovery and restoration of a cavalry officer's close helmet was given the full publicity treatment; it also led to a long search for similar pieces and ended in a military museum at Great Yarmouth, lots of bits and pieces of armour too which took a deal of identification, even if there was little drama about them. Drama came when a victim of the 1622 killing was convincingly produced, his forehead split by a spade, his scalp taken, and a bang on the back of the head established as having finally killed him. The "Granny", a woman who was injured in the attack and crept away to die in a hole, was also good material for press and television. These discoveries formed only part of a somewhat grisly process of deciding which of the many burials found were of victims of epidemic disease, of the Indian attack, or of more usual causes.

Only the high spots of the story are given here, but time after time the telling reveals the ingenuity and pertinacity of Noel Hume and of his wife Audrey, with whom he conducts, in the book, amusing argumentative dialogues while decisions are being reached. *Martin's Hundred*, with its some distance apart, with stout upright planks in between, formed the palisade, not the upright tree-trunks hitherto thought to have been used. The calculation of the firing step and the arrangement of the watchtower and bastion (as they were plotted) was difficult since so little was left. There then followed the finding of an enclosed area which had in it what had been storehouses and a dwelling: this was given the name of "the Company Compound". In it was a well and much pottery's waste, showing pottery had been made here between 1619 and 1622, along with many other artefacts. The next was another enclosure, this time dominated by what had been a large designated "the Company Enclosure". Finally, near the river a small domestic enclosure was uncovered. The main part of Wolstenholme Town was never found,

The Ingres of existentialism

Catherine Lampert

LAWRENCE GOWING

Lucian Freud
230pp. Thames and Hudson. £18. 0 500 09154 4

Lawrence Gowing's *Lucian Freud*, on which the artist has collaborated, makes available for the first time an extensive survey of Freud's work from 1937 to 1982. Admirers of his painting have previously only had access to a handful of pictures in public collections such as "Ochre" with roses, and "Addington" interior. Harry Diamond, the great majority of the paintings, drawings and etchings reproduced here, were "lost" on completion to "private" collectors. Freud's work first became known in literary context—a drawing published in *Horizon* in 1940 (when he was seventeen), illustrations alongside Nicholas Moore's poetry four years later and portraits of Stephen Spender, Cyril Connolly and Christian Bérard in the 1940s.

Herbert Read labelled the young Freud "the Ingres of Existentialism", embracing the mixture of classicism, confident self-reliance and the solemn face of the masters. In the last ten years, however, his position in the graphic world has been challenged by Freud's clearly contemporary art in a much more radical way of painting, posing and related interests. The review

pictures present a new vision of human flesh. On the wall and on the page, untitled and undated, they allow no social access to the artist: this is a special challenge for people who love painting for itself.

Lawrence Gowing, a practising painter and long-standing partisan of a number of modern British artists, never confuses his own words or reactions with those of Freud. The way in which he describes the weeks during the winter of 1981-82 when the two met to discuss painting suggests a book that is a quest for personalities. Calling him "the heavy-footed" and Freud "light-footed", Gowing allows his moments of maladroitness to expose vital issues. For instance, when Gowing is on the verge of asking what problem Freud hopes to solve, the artist declares all "picture-making", the statement, "I want it to be more inevitable than that". Gowing's highly readable and profound text is at once didactic, lyrical, and friendly. First, he describes and dramatizes three important periods (1947, 1958-59, and 1970) in Freud's life, which elude to specific images. Then he draws attention to several of the tools employed by the artist. Freud's equipment is observed to have changed from a sable brush which allowed paint to dry with immaculate luminosity, to a hog-hair brush that binds paint within ridges or peaks. The ink hatching and scribbles that characterize his earlier style gradually re-emerge as a network of delicate strokes of oil paint, as Freud's "Kleinian" work, segment Freud's

works at intervals throughout a twenty-four hour day studying from all angles flesh deprived of daylight and of sleep. In his paintings, livid bursts of vein and muscle are placed next to highly tactile translations of linen, leather and silk; often animals such as monkeys, dogs or a rat; rest next to the sitters.

Sometimes Gowing's descriptions of Freud's procedures are too sophisticated. A large, unillustrated, and at the date of publication unfinished, painting is said to have "unrolled a few inches" between two visits of the author to the studio. By this reference we are meant to understand that the painted area, often re-painted, spreads from the interior inch-by-inch leaving areas of bare canvas. It recalls the misleading corner of guilt when "Naked Portraits" were exhibited in 1978. This technique is not a popular one today, and it further evidences Freud's distancing from modernist "picture-making". He maintains that everything he does is a reaction against something, mainly against himself. His fascination with a reproduction of Egyptian heads from Amarna is cited. Could he have been rivalling Picasso at Avignon in 1911 drawing of a boy or remembering Balthus's painting of Miro and daughter in his own double portrait of 1949?

References to other artists are rare here, though Cezanne, Matisse, and Picasso's place and there is a mysterious reference to Freud's "Piers in the School of London". The "school" being B. B. Kitt's term,

although, in a catalogue introduction to an exhibition of eight figurative painters at Yale University in 1981, Gowing also used it and likened the circle of its members. But in this instance and elsewhere it was without naming the other artists; the allusions are unhelpful and implied comparisons invidious.

Gowing is good when he redefines the genre of "figurative painting". He believes its aim should be not to achieve "likeness" but to reveal to the viewer "the presence of something unparalleled and wonderful". The important painting "Figure with two arms" (1961-62) is considered at length. Stroked paint and the triangular foreground of the woman's torso register uncomfortably on the printed page, but by the end of Gowing's description we have been imaginatively transported to the room where the canvas hangs and shown that scale makes "his two-dimensional image" seem true. Gowing explains why Freud seldom identifies his sitters in the titles of paintings. For the viewer such knowledge is dangerous and distracting and Freud's life in art has demanded a personal ruthlessness: secrecy and change have been imperative. In 1954 in *Encounter* Freud stated that the painter's tastes must grow out of what obsesses him in life. "A painter must think of everything he sees as being there entirely for his own use and pleasure. The artist who tries to serve nature is only an expulsive artist."

Enterieg discreetly where he believes the heart of the matter to be. Gowing considers Ingres's definition in 1870 in 1970 to paint his recently widowed mother. Lying on her back, in a pale dress, she is breathtakingly beautiful. The way in which she is painted and the faraway look caution us that the haunting passage of canvas and paint, the product of two people who are the same flesh and blood. The artist who is not posing for our benefit, the recent portraits of three of the painter's daughters—Rose, Esther and Julia—are designated "the grandest", and this is not an overstatement, though they are small in scale. Bella's mouth and shoulders palpitate with her thought and the faintest expectation which over Esther's body. Just as Freud's painted children can never be said to have exuded innocence, the youth of these sitters is in no way romanticized.

All the models gain Gowing respect; he wisely identifies them and appears in several works, some as caricature—"the dark girl with white eyes", "the woman smiling" and "the woman with a white face". In the latest pictures bulk, however, are commentators, whom Pagden criticizes for a failure to look beneath the words on the printed page. At the same time, however, he is somewhat open to disagreement. It is not evident to me, for example, that he uses the phrase "natural" correctly in the sixteenth-century context, and fails to take account of the widely accepted Ovidian

The Bengal trade

C. R. Boxer

FRANK LEQUIN

Het Personeel van de verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Azie in de Achttiende eeuw, meer in het bijzonder in de vesting Bengal
700pp, 12 maps and portraits.
Obtainable from the author at de Binnenvestigings 36, 2311 NV Leliden, The Netherlands.

This very substantial and innovative Leiden University thesis analyses and discusses the European personnel of the Dutch East-India Company (VOC) in Asia in general and more particularly in Bengal during the eighteenth century. Its documents (in great detail) go to both quality and quantity, ranging from the ill-paid and ill-fortuned soldier (mostly mercenaries of German origin) to the lavish life-style of some of the senior "qualified" servants. These latter included J.M. Ross, Director in 1776-81, whose "regal magnificence" so impressed William Hickey, and who was a personal friend of Robert Clive and Warren Hastings. Chinsura was the principal Dutch settlement but there were subordinate stations at Patna and Cassimbazar.

Despite extensive losses in the archives of the VOC in the

Netherlands, an enormous amount of material still remains in some sections, necessitating the use of a computer to extract the relevant information. With this mechanical aid, supplemented by consultation of a wide range of primary sources, including the EIC records in the India Office at London and the ledger of the Bank of England and Records at Rochester, Frank Lequin has compiled a wealth of detail (much of it arranged in statistical and tabular forms) about the personnel involved. It includes their often complex financial arrangements for "getting, spending, and investing" (to borrow the title of a book by Alice Carter). The Directors of the VOC in the Netherlands (*The Heren XVII*) had to meet, in the years 1753-87, the payment of at least Dfl. 103,826,667 for the bill of exchange drawn in the Dutch trading settlements from Cape Town to Canton. This amount was almost equal to the sums transferred to Europe by EIC bills of exchange from Calcutta in the much longer period 1709-10/1783-84. The *Heren XVII* paid in the years 1755-81 at least Dfl. 18,402,366 for VOC bills from Chinsura alone.

The VOC was established in Bengal by 1655, long before the British founded Calcutta; but it was rapidly overshadowed by the EIC after the decade 1720-30. It was reduced to a virtually subordinate status in 1759, following a badly bungled attempt to

retrieve its deteriorating political position by force of arms. Nevertheless, the Dutch commercial and social presence in Bengal continued for the remainder of the eighteenth century. Several of its "qualified servants" were interesting personalities in their own right, as can be seen from the section, here too "Who's Who in Bengal".

This book, lavishly annotated and admirably indexed, most usefully complements the standard works of Peter Marshall, S. C. Ghosh, Ashin Das Gupta, et al, breaking new ground in several respects. There is an informative English summary on pages 206-14; but perhaps some enterprising Indian publisher will give us an English translation.

Government Organization Manuals 1900-1980

The organization and personnel of the Government of 73 countries throughout the world.
Published on microfiche by Clivys/Hale/Hale Ltd.
20 Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB5 8DT.
Telephone (0223) 311479.

All that glisters

Richard West

TIMOTHY GREEN

The New World of Gold: The Inside Story of the Mines, the Markets, the Politics, the Investors
260pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£7.95.
0 297 7801379

EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN

The Diamond Invention
270pp. Hutchinson. £7.95.
0 09 147690 9

The Bayreuth production of the *Ring*, recently televised by the BBC, was praised by some of our critics for its political acumen in showing Wotan and the rest as capitalists exploiting the gold-mining class. "We have to dig it out, melt and forge, while his hoard grows high" — as one of the Nibelungs whines about Alberich. It did not require these Bayreuth Marxists to "bring out" political lessons from Wagner. His own message was loud and clear. The *Ring* was and remains the great study of greed, and in particular man's lust for gold. Already the ancient civilizations of Mexico and Peru had been destroyed in the quest for "El Dorado", the man pointed in gold. As Wagner was writing the *Ring*, a new scramble for gold was taking place in Australia and in California. A few years later, discoveries on the Witwatersrand were to bring into being the city of gold, Johannesburg, which somebody described as "Monte Carlo superimposed on Sodom and Gomorrah".

The history of South Africa's gold bears out the prophecy of the *Ring*. In the first place, almost all of the mining entrepreneurs like Beit, Ekstein and Oppenheimer were, like the villains of Wagner, German Jews, and most of them from the Rhine cities. The anti-semitic tone of the *Ring* — especially its caricature of Alberich — reflected a widespread prejudice against gold financiers. This prejudice was especially marked in liberal newspapers such as the *Manchester Guardian*, which wrote that the Boer War was started by Jewish capitalists in order to steal Johannesburg from the Afrikaners. Recent research by Thomas Pakenham tends to suggest that the *Manchester Guardian* got this right: our pro-Consul Milner was in cahoots with Beit and others in order to goad the Boers to war. But victory in that war brought down on the English and all South African people what

Wagner described as "the curse of the Ring".

The Boer War was followed by strife between the gold-mining capitalists and their English and Afrikaner miners. This erupted in 1922 in what was described as a strike but was more of a revolution, when white miners, protesting against the recruitment of blacks, rose under the Communist Party and its slogan: "Workers of the World Unite for a White South Africa". More than a hundred were killed by bombing, artillery fire and infantry charges. Although the government won this battle, the miners were set on the road towards the present Republic and the apartheid system. The curse of the *Ring* which had set the English against the Boers, now set the whites against blacks and coloureds. As Paul Kruger, the Boer leader, had prophesied: "I tell you, today, that every ounce of gold taken from the bowels of our soil will yet have to be weighed against rivers of tears".

It must also be said that the Curse of the Ring has fallen still more heavily on the Communist world than it has on South Africa. The Soviet Union has always produced its gold in secrecy, but the surviving miners reveal that some of the mines were death-camps. During the 1930s, several million prisoner-slaves were frozen, starved or beaten to death at Kolyma, in northern Siberia. In his *Gulag Archipelago*, Solzhenitsyn has told of the other methods employed by Stalin to get the metal. Beginning in 1929, the GPU arrested anyone who, they thought, might harbour some gold; dental technicians, jewellers, watch repairmen.

The Petersburg draymen all had gold hidden away. Nothing, neither proletarian niggers nor revolutionary services — served as a defence against a gold denunciation. All were arrested, all were crammed into GPU cells in numbers no-one had considered possible up till then. . . . Cough up your gold, viper! The prisoners got salt food to eat but no water. Whoever coughed up a gold piece got one cup of fresh water but some people still refused to disclose their hoard, or had no hoard to disclose. These last were beaten, burned, or stomped to the point of death before the interrogators believed them.

In Russia, as in most countries prone to revolution and war, millions of humble people kept a hoard of gold. As Timothy Green explains in his very

informative book, after the Second World War tens of thousands of Germans used gold as a way of paying for immunity from deportation. The French are still great hoarders of gold. So were the Vietnamese, who also believed in a myth of the Mekong comparable to the Nibelung story: before the Communists came to power, there was a bar beside the river at My Tho showing a mural of the "Mekong Maidens". Many thousands of Vietnamese were later able to use their *taels* of gold to pay for a place on a boat to freedom. Some of the rest have now been dispatched to the Soviet Union to toil on half-pay — perhaps in the gold-fields.

Or they may have been sent to the equally secret diamond mines, for diamonds rival gold as the Soviet Union's richest export. On the subject of Soviet diamonds, Edward Jay Epstein tells us little — but more than we knew before. Unlike Green, who ignores the shadier aspects of gold mining, Epstein claims to have written an expose of the international diamond monopoly. His manner is disrespectful, and sometimes, perhaps, he gives too much credit to what are mere conspiracy theories. I simply do not believe that the British government in 1953 threatened to place an embargo on port wine, if Portugal failed to renew its contract with De Beers. Nor is it really true that as late as the 1940s, Britain controlled the financial affairs of South Africa. But most of the book is well founded on facts obtained under the US Freedom of Information laws.

Much of the information is startling. This book discloses more than ever before of the strange and perhaps unholy alliance of Soviet Russia and the Republic of South Africa, the world's two major suppliers of both gold and diamonds. We had already learned from R. W. Johnson's *How Long Will South Africa Survive?* how France, South Africa and the USSR during the 1960s combined against the United States to float the price of gold that had previously stood at \$35 an ounce. South Africa, in the shape of its Anglo-American Corporation (which was never American and is no longer English), works still more closely with Russia in marketing and maintaining the price of diamonds.

A Soviet diamond expert is resident at the Anglo diamond mine in Lesotho, a South African enclave. South Africans in return make frequent visits to Moscow. All Russian diamonds are marketed by South Africa, and, so Epstein tells us, Russian dealers have

learned the traditional Yiddish phrases of blessing like "Mazel and Brueha". When the Marxist government of Angola wanted to market diamonds through a non-South African country, the Russians ordered them to return to the Anglo-American organization. Paradoxically, several quasi-Marxist states of Africa market diamonds through South Africa, while right-wing Zaire is trying to break the Anglo-American monopoly.

The best chapter of Epstein's book recounts how South Africa helped the Russians to off-load millions of dollars' worth of diamonds on to the US market. Although diamonds have always been prized for their beauty, the big increase in their production during the past hundred years has meant that the gems, to maintain their price, must be marketed to the general public as well as to kings and maharajahs. The Europeans have never coveted diamonds as much as gold. After the Second World War, the Anglo-American company scored a success in promoting the stones to the Japanese for engagement rings. But the principal market has always been the United States.

In 1945, De Beers, the diamond side of Anglo-American, started a fresh campaign on behalf of diamonds in order to lure the US troops returning to marry their wartime sweethearts. The New York advertising agency, N. W. Ayer, "stressed the need to vivify the association in the public's mind between diamonds and romance". Hollywood was enlisted to show film stars a-glitter with gems. Slogans were coined or peddled, such as "a diamond is forever" or "a girl's best friend". Above all N. W. Ayer sought to suggest that "the larger and finer the diamond the greater the expression of love".

All went well until the production of South African diamonds started to outstrip the rate of marriage in the United States. The resourceful N. W. Ayer next came up with a programme to plant in the public mind the idea of the gift of a second diamond in later life, as a sign of an "over-growing love".

Then, as Epstein relates: "The diamond mind had to be further restructured in the mid-1960s to accommodate the surfeit of minute Siberian diamonds that De Beers undertook to market for the Russians. . . . Up to this point De Beers had been largely responsible for reducing the market for small, under one-carat

diamonds. Through its twenty-year advertising campaign, it had of the size of a diamond as a status symbol or 'badge'. Now a campaign was started to make people appreciate the diamond not for its size but for its 'perfection'. Larger diamonds were portrayed as ostentatious and vulgar. De Beers then devised the 'eternity ring', made up of hundreds of tiny Soviet-sized diamonds, which could be sold to an entirely new market of married women". Thus the Soviet Union managed to sell its largest single export, diamonds, to its hated foe, the United States, thanks to *operetta* South Africa.

This partnership of Boer and Bolsheviks may not continue to prosper. The price of gold, which went up to \$800 an ounce in 1980 has not returned to anything like that level; indeed South Africa has been obliged to apply for a loan from the International Monetary Fund. Gold always tends to find a stable value. The State Treasury of Alaska is quoted by Green as saying: "Regardless of the dollar price involved, one ounce of gold will purchase a good-quality man's suit, the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt, and today."

Gem diamonds, as distinct from the drab industrial stones, have little intrinsic value. They are very hard to recell — except through De Beers. Stolen diamonds are almost worthless. Even the finest and largest gem stones worth only what Anglo-American says they are worth. To make things more difficult for the Soviet Union and South Africa, there is now an export threat to this present monopoly. Australia has discovered diamonds in Late Antiquity, the walking dead in Haiti, the witch-hunting Leopard Men in Africa and the Californian Church of Satan. O'Keefe's general theory lies within the Durkheimian tradition of social theorizing. More specifically, he says tribute to the insights of Durkheim's younger contemporary and collaborator, Marcel Mauss. Indeed, some extent *Stolen Lightning* may be read as an exegesis on and elaboration of the observations on magic which Mauss scattered throughout his writings. But, despite the prominence which O'Keefe aims to give to Mauss, Mauss's ideas are in danger of being drowned by other voices clamouring for attention — Arnold, Barthes, Barzun, Berger, Berman, Cassirer, Duménil, Gellner, Eliot, Engels, Freud, Goffman, Geertz, Gluckman, Godel, Goffman, Habermas, Halbwachs, Horkheimer, Horney, Kuhn, Kris, Malinowski, Marx, Mead, Piaget, Polanyi, Rapoport, Reich, Ruch, Sartre, Scheler, Vehlen, Weber, Wittfogel, Witt-

We learn from Epstein that De Beers spent much to publish his tribute to the insights of Durkheim's younger contemporary and collaborator, Marcel Mauss. Indeed, some extent *Stolen Lightning* may be read as an exegesis on and elaboration of the observations on magic which Mauss scattered throughout his writings. But, despite the prominence which O'Keefe aims to give to Mauss, Mauss's ideas are in danger of being drowned by other voices clamouring for attention — Arnold, Barthes, Barzun, Berger, Berman, Cassirer, Duménil, Gellner, Eliot, Engels, Freud, Goffman, Geertz, Gluckman, Godel, Goffman, Habermas, Halbwachs, Horkheimer, Horney, Kuhn, Kris, Malinowski, Marx, Mead, Piaget, Polanyi, Rapoport, Reich, Ruch, Sartre, Scheler, Vehlen, Weber, Wittfogel, Witt-

Making use of mumbo-jumbo

Robert Irwin

DANIEL LAWRENCE O'KEEFE
Stolen Lightning: The Social Theory of Magic
531pp. Oxford: Martin Robertson.
£15.00.
0 85320 486 9

Early on in *Stolen Lightning*, Daniel O'Keefe's social theory of magic is set out in a series of thirteen gnomic propositions, rather like a new *Enchiridion* Table by some twentieth-century Hermes Trismegistus. The gist of the argument, as it emerges from the propositions, may be summarized as follows. Religion is a projection of society, and magic a by-product of that projection. Magic is a form of social action which is seen to be effective through social agreement. Magic derives its form, its symbolism and its language from religion (it "steals religion's lightning"). Although magic derives from religion and although it is sometimes in opposition to religion, it can and does sometimes feed fruitfully back into religion. Magic has served to protect the self from social pressures and to establish individuals in society, it crosses cultural frontiers easily, it acquires traditions and scripts like a snowflake, it survives in many societies as well as overt form, in a twentieth-century Western civilization.

Since O'Keefe aims to cover all magical beliefs and practices, as well as quasi- and para-magical usages, the general theory is, inevitably, somewhat general. It has to embrace those downwardly mobile old women in seventeenth-century England, the shamans who double as healers and community mediators in Siberia, the ambitious charlatans and rhetoricians of Late Antiquity, the walking dead in Haiti, the witch-hunting Leopard Men in Africa and the Californian Church of Satan. O'Keefe's general theory lies within the Durkheimian tradition of social theorizing. More specifically, he says tribute to the insights of Durkheim's younger contemporary and collaborator, Marcel Mauss. Indeed, some extent *Stolen Lightning* may be read as an exegesis on and elaboration of the observations on magic which Mauss scattered throughout his writings. But, despite the prominence which O'Keefe aims to give to Mauss, Mauss's ideas are in danger of being drowned by other voices clamouring for attention — Arnold, Barthes, Barzun, Berger, Berman, Cassirer, Duménil, Gellner, Eliot, Engels, Freud, Goffman, Geertz, Gluckman, Godel, Goffman, Habermas, Halbwachs, Horkheimer, Horney, Kuhn, Kris, Malinowski, Marx, Mead, Piaget, Polanyi, Rapoport, Reich, Ruch, Sartre, Scheler, Vehlen, Weber, Wittfogel, Witt-

Not everyone would regard those authorities as acceptable. When O'Keefe comes to discuss Jesus, he is torn between Jesus as mushroom-eater (John Allegro) and Jesus as demon-raiser (the late apocryphal gospels and Morton Smith). Elsewhere O'Keefe has a preference for the great classics: de Coulanges on Roman ancestor worship, Gibbon on the reign of Diocletian, Pirenne on the mystical and urban origins of the friars, Robertson Smith on early Arabian

genstein and many others. They come at you, ten or twenty at a time. It is all quite intimidating. It is as if "magic" was being used as a vehicle for the study of those who study it, and the book sometimes reads like an encyclopedia of theories about magic, religion and society — an encyclopedia without an index, alas.

O'Keefe takes data from anthropological fieldwork, insights from psychoanalysis, general theory from sociology and he clips, trims and redirets so to consolidate his postulates. The general effect is somewhat reminiscent of Raphael's fresco of the "Disputa" in the Vatican, where the doctors of the Church, who have contended so fiercely and on so many issues, turn at last to point to the one great Truth on which they all must agree. The astonishing thing about O'Keefe's grand synthesis is that, to a large extent, it works. It is self-consistent and defended in detail. Moreover his expositions and criticisms of the Frankfurt school, the Warburg school, the Oxford group of anthropological historians, are usually accurate and to the point. Names are not dropped without purpose. They fall into place in the synthesis. The argument is clear and often eloquent and witty. On the way one picks up a great deal of incidental information of the "Believe-It-or-Not" kind: the incidence of olism among the Tatars, the occult ramifications of the Kennedy assassination, the magical origins of backgammon and garden gnomes are among the tit-bits.

In a work of such range and detail there is much that is excellent, much that is contentiously and some things that are simply wrong. One area of worry is O'Keefe's odd attitude to his sources. He argues that all theorizing about magic tends to become part of magic's own self-elaboration. On the one hand, however, he clearly regards some theories as more magical than others. Thus the Interpretations of magic by Jung, Lévi-Strauss and to some extent the Warburg group are not regarded by O'Keefe as distinct from what they study. They are part of magic's accumulating baggage. On the other hand, while he is clearly aware of their weaknesses, he is prepared when it suits him to use Carlos Castaneda as a source on the Yaqui way of knowledge, Idries Shah on oriental magic and Frazer and Berger on the occult origins of Nazism.

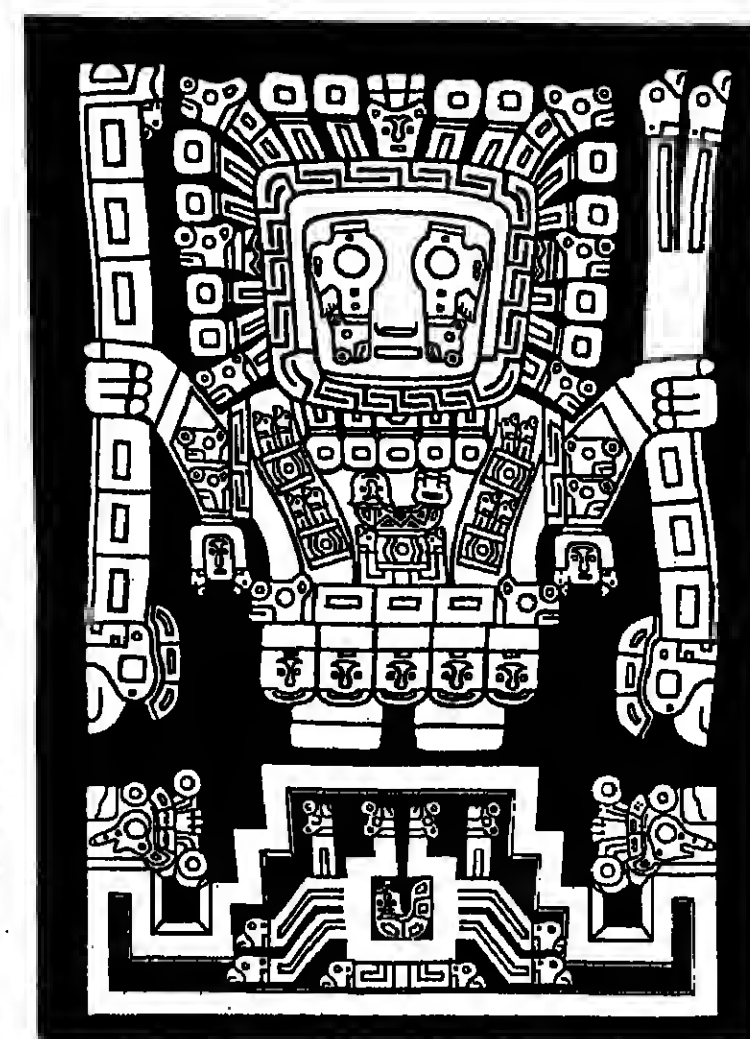
Not everyone would regard those authorities as acceptable. When O'Keefe comes to discuss Jesus, he is torn between Jesus as mushroom-eater (John Allegro) and Jesus as demon-raiser (the late apocryphal gospels and Morton Smith). Elsewhere O'Keefe has a preference for the great classics: de Coulanges on Roman ancestor worship, Gibbon on the reign of Diocletian, Pirenne on the mystical and urban origins of the friars, Robertson Smith on early Arabian

religion. They were all great writers and seminal thinkers, but, while sociologists apparently continue to consult the scholarly authorities that the generation of Durkheim and Weber consulted, scholarship on these topics has moved on.

Socially based hypotheses to explain the rise of witchcraft and the witch-hunt can be easily produced; similar arguments for the social origin of the vampire and werewolf become fascinatingly tortuous ("they are projections of society's terrible power to kill"). But social theorizing works less well when it is applied to the occult sciences and divinatory systems. O'Keefe seems ill at ease when he writes about alchemy — as well he might, for he relies on those modern gnostics Carl Jung, T. S. Burkhart and Mircea Eliade. John Holmbyrd, Paul Kraus and Joseph Needham have given him a totally different picture of the subject, though one that is no less difficult to assimilate within O'Keefe's general scheme. As far as the I Ching is concerned, O'Keefe follows Durkheim and Mauss in regarding it as a system of divination which evolved from a primitive system of classification; but Needham has shown that it is more likely that it was originally a collection of divinatory texts which came later to be used as a general system of classification.

Since "Magic is a form of social action" is both the beginning and the end of O'Keefe's journey, he is bound to give unympathetic treatment to those Interpretations of magic which stress its epistemological role in structuring and explaining, not so much man's relation to other men, but his relation to the natural world and the cosmos. Hermeticism and Neo-Platonism, for instance, are given functional roles as enabling agents which create an intellectual environment within which witches could be persecuted. But this would need a lot more elaboration to become convincing. Few of the witch-theories were well up in hermeticism and Neo-Platonism. O'Keefe implies that the fifteenth-century witch-hunters and authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, Kramer and Sprenger, read widely in hermetic treatises and grimoires. I know of no evidence that this was the case. Moreover there seems to be no correlation between belief in witchcraft and belief in astrology. In the early modern period Pico della Mirandola attacked astrology while defending belief in witchcraft. Contrariwise Pausanias defended astrology while denying witchcraft.

O'Keefe's overall perception of magic is greivly functional and somewhat despicible. He approvingly elicits Malinowski on its boredom, V. S. Naipaul on its dehumanizing effects and Adorno's castigation of it as "the metaphysics of the poor". This emphasis on magic as self-defence and as social policeman elides the glamour, what those cultures have joined?



The central figure on the Sun Portal at Tiahuanaco, Bolivia (c AD 900-1000): an illustration from The Cult of the Serpent by Balaji Mundkur (363pp. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, \$39.50, 0 87395 631 1).

the art, the dressing-up and the wonder-tale elements in magic. Where would Aleister Crowley have been without his costumes and his set-pieces of theatre? What for that matter would he have thought of the thirteen postulates of the general theory of magic?

A more serious worry, though, is whether a useful purpose has been achieved by imposing a modern Western classification, "magical", on activities which are not so classified by the cultures that practise them, while excluding some of the practices that are so classified by those cultures. Thus in medieval Islamic treatises on magic (*sihr*) one will indeed find instructions on how to raise spirits and make nuptials, but these matters are embedded in texts which discuss the sciences of poisons, automata and treasure-hunting as well as the art of conjuring as if they were all branches of the same subject. Then again, Chinese geomancy is compounded in equal parts of what we would recognize as occultism and what we would recognize as aesthetics. Must we pull asunder what those cultures have joined?

Evans-Pritchard's *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937) has had an acknowledged influence on some of the most interesting work done subsequently on the history of Western magic and witchcraft — by Peter Brown, Alan MacIntyre and Keith Thomas, among others. But many students of what they have written must have been struck by how little help the Azande distinction between witch and sorcerer and the Azande explanations for misfortune are when it comes to exploring the ebb and flow of magic in European history. Nevertheless, the stimulus that Evans-Pritchard's fieldwork provided is undeniable. It is certainly possible that O'Keefe's remarkable book may have a similar effect on a future generation of historians — though it may be that the chief value of *Stolen Lightning* will turn out to lie in its reinterpretation of data from anthropology and history for the benefit of sociologists. Finally, I wonder why Van Gennep repeatedly appears as Van Gennep. Foucault as Foucault and Lévi-Strauss as Lévi-Strauss. Is this perhaps some form of otiose defence against the power of their names?

Customs

Flaming rainis snatched like souls
Out of the Keeper's bowl, the lowest sign.
The spark-holder, the upward dragon of winter.
Add the Doctor applies his bottle
To the fallen Slander's mouth.
White going from house to house
As the Sun goeth forth out of the lowest sign
And our blackface is the dark
In which the sun was buried.
We dance in the lighted lanes
In the slant light, in blackface.
Blackened, howling and hobbling
Blind men's buff, all masked
Like the sun, who goeth forth,
Lifting his bowl of flame, full of green souls.
Now the giants stalk forth, in Summer
The giants on play stiles
We carry the green giants out;
With awaking bought, we carry them.

Peter Redgrove

Per ardua ad skytrain

Mary Goldring

HOWARD BANKS
The Rise and Fall of Freddie Laker
150pp. Faber. £6.95 (paperback, £2.50).
0 571 11986 7

The most significant fact about Sir Freddie Laker is that he made only one serious mistake in a business career of 30 years. It was a fatal one. He was more ambitious than he was wise. He was too greedy to feel he was winning, and this is the thrust of Howard Banks' argument — to believe that he could take on all comers, from governments to judges, and emerge victorious. But take away the façade and he dwindles into just another shuffling airline operator whose creditors called in the receiver on the Fourth of February, 1992. It happens all the time.

held when Sir Freddie decided shortly after that he would like roughly to treble the size of his airline and buy £380 million worth of jets. The alarm bells were silent until Laker was unable to pay the interest on these loans.

Of course they should have rung sooner. Mr Banks (I think that Laker's backers, oldest and truest of which was the Midland Bank, could have done more to save him from his own folly. But in the end, responsibility for the rise and fall of both airline and man rests on Laker's shoulders. The moment and the immediate aftermath of the collapse comes to two sad conclusions. The first is that Laker would have been in business today if he had been content with the original Skytrain scheme for flights to America and if success had not gone to his head. But as soon as Skytrain was established, he started on a crimpingly expensive project to extend it round the world. The second, which is sadder still, argues that the round of air-fare cutting that coincided with the appearance of Skytrain would have happened even if he had never existed. Far from being the great liberator of the flying public, Laker was, Banks argues, an irrelevance and he demonstrates this by setting out as clearly as anyone can, the Byzantine manoeuvres between governments and airlines, and particularly between the British and Americans about air-fare and air traffic, that were running in parallel but behind the scenes while, on-stage, Laker was fighting the case

for Skytrain through the licensing authorities and the courts. He provided a smokescreen behind which he manoeuvred their guns. But it was, in the end, only smoke.

This is not the view of the Laker receiver, who has started legal proceedings against the North American airlines. They, he argues, in order to cut fares low enough to drive Laker out of business, it is true that in a well-documented series of meetings held by the International Air Transport Association, the airlines, led by the British and Americans, debated what they should do about Laker's competition and decided sorrowfully that their only option was to match his fares. He had captured 15 per cent of the London-New York market in four years and almost a third of the other Atlantic routes. He could not go unchallenged. Any airline that undercuts the IATA cartel is going to attract the business. Most airlines do this then go out of business because the fares do not quite cover their costs and the faster business grows, the more they lose. That is what happened to most of Laker's contemporaries. But it did not happen to him because those were the figures he always got right. He wasn't ashamed to raise Skytrain fares when they were wrong.

If Banks is correct, and this part of the Laker business was jolly, then there is no reason why other airlines should not make a profit at lower fares. A graph of air traffic would show that at predictable intervals, growth gets a

sharp upward kick from across-the-board cuts in fares. New and more efficient jets will already have lowered operating costs. But these aircraft are efficient mainly because they are bigger, so they automatically create a surplus of seats that pushes the airlines towards cutting fares rather than towards maximizing profits. Laker, with his efficient new DC10s, chose across-the-board fare cuts. Other airline managements, with their psychological fixation on the theory of marginal pricing, tried to restrict their bargain offers to new passengers only, so that air tariffs are an inextricably tangled mess which has created a whole new travel industry dedicated to untangling them.

In *The Rise and Fall of Freddie Laker* a good book? Within its limitations of time and space it is excellent. Banks distinguishes the cardboard cut-out from the real man behind it; a man of big appetites, with a messy, often tragic private life that he managed to keep relatively private. A man of genuine talent, guilty of only the one serious mistake. And that, in the view of the British licensing authorities, was not cause to debar him from the travel business. Laker now has his holiday licence back and is re-starting amid the ashes.

Any book written before those ashes are cool is going to be short on detail. Banks has produced a subtle and exceedingly sophisticated analysis of Laker's rise and fall and the background against which it occurred:

I happen to agree with it but there has been neither the time nor the space to provide the factual proof that would convince the sceptics who do not. However, Banks likes and admires Freddie Laker but doesn't see him as the great catalyst he has been made out to be. If you are in the business of demolishing popular idols, you do need rather more supporting facts. A second book, perhaps?

The Consumers' Association now has an income of £12,000,000 a year and a magazine *Which?* a circulation of over 625,000. It is comfortable, though, that this institution dedicated to the protection of the consumer has been taken over by the dangers of both its own and manufacturers' material greed and technical incompetence has celebrated its silver jubilee by publishing a book, *Which? 25: Consumers' Association 1957-1982*, by Eirlys Roberts (1982, £2.95, 0 340 33021 X), that looks at the individuals responsible for its growth and development not as its humble origins — "In the East End of London, in a one-room office which had recently been a garage, but which had been lovingly, if desperately, decorated and had a typewriter, a table and two chairs". Eirlys Roberts is also a former editor of *Which?* and is not afraid to recall some of the magazine's more unfortunate recommendations, such as the one which asked explorers to suggest that a dry battery in a fire would get rid of the soot in a chimney.

Plugged in

Venetia Newall

JANET AND COLIN BORD
Earth Ritual: Fertility Practices in Pre-industrial Britain
210pp. Granada. £8.95.
0 260 11431 2

Nineteenth-century thought was dominated by the doctrine of survival. Permeated by E. B. Tylor in his *Primitive Culture* (1891), it was based on the biological evolution proposed in Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, it set out a parallel line of cultural evolution. That excellent scholar, Ruth Finnegan, once observed:

The evolutionary and uncritical position... was totally rejected by academic anthropologists. Those "folklorists" who cling to the old "descriptive" framework and write about the folklore of the British Isles in terms of old local customs, bygone rituals, old superstitions, or "primitive" fertility cults, are regarded with scorn by modern professional anthropologists... as dilettante, uncritical and addicted to a totally outdated theoretical framework.

In earth-acupuncture standing stones (needles of stone) were placed to control the flow of earth energy. Tom Graves sees holy wells as needles in reverse. A needle of nothing connecting the energies of the water to the outside air, and the pagan bonfires as "needles of fire" parcelling the acupuncture practice of moxibustion, or the application of heat at selected points. Maypoles were "needles of wood" with energy being produced by dancing. The energy being "primed and directed

by the state of mind of the participants in the dance".

The Bords have harsh words for modern archaeologists, who are "limited by their own materialist world-view" and argue with approval that "magical" things like heart disease and cancer. Those who feel depressed at this point should be of good cheer, however. All will be well if we take up handicrafts and vegetarian diets, and rear the crops by organic methods, feeding the mind and spirit meanwhile with eastern philosophies and "the new pagan movement". They do not mention autism — too chilly, perhaps, for our climate — and acupuncture takes an unusual form:

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American notes

Christopher Hitchens

Of Dwight Macdonald, who died just before Christmas at the age of seventy-six, one might for once beg to be forgiven the obituarist's cliché. There was only one of him. His individualism became evident when he was writing for Henry Luce at *Fortune* in the 1930s and was irked by the excessive team spirit of the operation. It showed when he was crafting essays for the *New Yorker* (which published his sturdy defence of the King James Bible). But it found its apotheosis in the quintessential mass magazine *Politics*, of which he was founder, editor, publisher, copy reader and most valued contributor. Macdonald, said his friends and enemies, had finally found his true métier. On the traditional shoestring, he managed to solicit enduring contributions from Marianne Moore and Mary McCarthy, Albert Camus and André Gide, John Berryman and Bruno Bettelheim.

In his bearing and in his commitments, Macdonald might be loosely situated somewhere between Edmund Wilson and George Orwell. He was a man who (no doubt sometimes self-consciously) delighted in contradicting the majority, especially the majority of his own circle. His very last piece, which appeared in the excellent *New York Quarterly Grand Street*, was an almost deliberate echo of the life he had led in the old days of Greenwich Village. He beckoned to the shade of Delmore Schwartz, perpetual indigent who used to enter fiction contests in trashy magazines to raise the needed — and who never won. In this dank Bellevue veridict, Dwight Macdonald detected a trace of Henry James's story *The Next Time*, wherein a great novelist can't earn enough to clothe his children, and "romantic-lady" had to be drowned in literary revenues but soomed by the discerning reviews. Each would gladly exchange places. As Macdonald summarized James:

Both attempt to change their spots: the man writes down, trying for a cheap, popular potboiler, and the lady writes up, trying for something that will impress the critics. Both fall: his potboiler is widely acclaimed and widely unsold, her serious effort is panned by the critics but sets a new sales record.

This recalls the ambition of Peter de Vries to have a mass audience large enough for his select following to despise. It also, with its overtones of the "selling out" dilemma, reminds me that Macdonald's death snags one of the very last links to the old *Partisan Review*. The *PAR* crowd rather qualified the aphorism of de Vries. They dreamed of a mass audience, but positively preferred an élite one. Macdonald grappled with this seeming contradiction in his essays on the conflict between American "mass culture" and "mid cult". For the curious, these may still be found in the collection titled *Against the American Grain* which, properly considered and to his own surprise, Macdonald wasn't.

American attitudes to the fictions of the Spanish subcontinent are becoming more complex and more considered, as well as preserving their customary ambiguity. As bilingualism seeps in through the *West*, *California*, *Texan* and *Tex-Mex* literatures, the *Grain* becomes available to Carlos Fuentes, Jorge Luis Borges and Octavio Paz (Pablo Neruda remains more revered than read). But beyond a doubt the chief beneficiary of public interest in Latin writing is, and has for some time been, Gabriel García Márquez. His works have the envied sales potency of the campus classic and the no less craved support of the smart reviewers. Normally when a living author becomes a Nobel laureate, his books are hastily republished and set in the windows of popular stores. With Márquez, no such promotion was necessary. His stuff was on the stands already, artfully combining the lure of the exotically with the gritty conscience about the treatment of the southern neighbours. Some reciprocal double entendre, of a species which Márquez himself might relish, seems to be at work in the reluctance of the

authorities to allow him into the country.

The regulations which govern subversive activity emancipate the relevant officials from the obligation to state their reasons or to produce their evidence. The President of Colombia, from which ultramariane nation Márquez hails, recently raised the matter in person with Ronald Reagan. Thus far, nothing has resulted from this intervention. All that we know for sure is that in 1971 the author was granted a visa in order that he might receive an honorary doctorate from Columbia University. Now, today, whenever he is permitted to visit, it is the normally granted. Only two conditions apply. The stay must be of the briefest duration. And, no matter what the port of entry, his passport is stamped "For Lecture at Columbia University". At least one immigration office has guardedly congratulated Márquez for his accidental success in reproducing the texture of his own work among the otherwise unimaginative (but perhaps severely luxuriant and autonomous) systems of the cross-index.

There will, unless I am mistaken, be quite an intriguing little row over Professor Robert W. Tucker's latest book (*The Fall of the First British Empire: Origins of the War for American Independence*, written with David C. Hendrickson. This notice is without prejudice to a future review.) If anything is against the American grain, it is Tucker's view that the conventional approach of historians to the breach between London and the thirteen colonies is misleading and unselfish.

The consensus has for many years been that Benjamin Franklin was right. It was the obdurate policy of the British crown, beginning with the Grenville programme of 1764, that disrupted a hitherto mutual and profitable relationship between the metropolis and the periphery. The difficulty with this view is that it entails agreeing with Franklin that, before 1764, the Americans were "led by a thread". If I dare to summarize the Tucker/Hendrickson thesis, it is this: It was not changes in British policy (occasioned by the hubris of victory of the Seven Years War) but the evolution of *American* identity that caused the rupture. The British were, if anything, too reluctant to resort to the use of force. They feared a *revanche*iste Bourbon intervention in any quarrel on the Eastern seaboard, and strove for conciliation where they could. It was this, rather than the time-hallowed stupidity of the King and his ministers, which explained the numerous and finally disruptive violations in colonial policy. If this account be untrue, why was there no revolution over the Stamp Act?

Their interpretation brings the authors into collision with Sir Lewis Namier, whose view was that, once the first American challenge had been made, the subsequent process of unravelling was more or less inevitable. It isn't easy to think of Namier as a determinist, but after reading Tucker and Hendrickson one finds oneself querying his conviction that structural failure was such as to make British statesmen the prisoners of events.

Nor is Namier the only writer dodging the question. Thomas Paine, for whom the two authors have mentioned very seldom (considering that he first coined the title "United States of America", a fact unrecorded here) but always with contempt, his description of British motivation in the colonies — "interest, not attachment" — has been very generally accepted. Yet, to what will certainly be the life of many professionals, the authors say that there is no apparent reason (though for believing it to be any less true in the case of the colonies). They write elsewhere of Paine's greatest pamphlet *Common Sense*, written in 1776, that had it been published somewhat earlier, its author would have been "looked upon as either a madman or a French agent, features of his character that would not be displayed fully for another generation." I'm not sure what is meant by "French agent" in that context, but I'm perfectly certain that the dispute over this book will be well worth following.

Professing Literature

Sir, — It sometimes boggles the mind to discover how little understood American life and culture are in Britain. Through American higher education is the most diverse and pluralistic in the world, when the TLS attempted to present a cross-section of current thinking on the teaching of literature (December 10), it picked four Americans — René Wellek, Professor Emeritus at Yale, Paul de Man, one of Wellek's younger colleagues, and E. D. Hirsch, Jr. and Stanley Fish, who took their graduate degrees at Yale when Wellek and his Fugitive, Agrarian, New Critical compeers were at the zenith of their influence there. All four of these men have studied and taught only at élite universities with major graduate schools and all share an overriding interest in literary theory. To find a comparable "spectrum" of British academics, all of your commentators should have been drawn from among former students or present fellows of (say) New College, all currently holding professorships at Oxford or Cambridge.

Much as I admire Professor Wellek's vast learning and gentlemanly grace, his lifelong efforts to broaden our knowledge of literary and critical traditions, while at the same time respecting the range of the acceptable canon, have not been entirely salutary. One of the most devastating effects of narrowing the interests of teachers of English in the name of literary purity has been an unnecessarily large jump in unemployment among humanist teachers, as Walter Jackson Bates emphasizes in "The Crisis in English Studies", an essay to which de Man and Fish point with scorn. Though, as de Man notes, Bates was incorrect in calling Jacques Derrida a "puckish Parisian", de Man and Fish are wrong in a much broader and deeper way when they delight in the prospect that their approach will reduce English departments to "much smaller units dedicated to the professional specialization that Professor Bates deplores" (de Man). Among those being asked to sacrifice their careers to the Moloch of professionalism are present and recent students whose tuition helps pay the salaries of de Man and Fish and whose underpaid labour saves these gurus of professional purity from having to stoop to matters so mundane as teaching anyone who does not aspire to profess literature.

Paul de Man attempts to broaden his appeal by arguing that his own views on literature are not much different, really, from those of Reuben Brower of Harvard. If that

were the case, nobody would be talking about a hermeneutical Mafia or a Gang of Four at Yale. Reuben Brower as scholar-critic, teacher and man elicits from most people the kind of warmth and admiration that de Man himself expresses. As de Man observes, Brower wrote not in theory but on great literature, because he believed that literature relates to life in a humanizing way. For de Man to identify his own ideas with Brower's is tantamount to declaring that a snake is very similar to an onlooker except that it has shorter ears and is a little more cold-blooded.

Blessedly, not all Yale's teachers — or its students from the 1950s — are quite as purist and elitist as de Man, but many who grew there under the blaze of the New Critical norm were so badly burned that the scars still show. Geoffrey Hartman, for example, has recently published a long book to argue that certain kinds of expository prose, which Brooks and Warren excluded from the canon, in fact sometimes possess literary interest and merit. This truism was never doubted by those of us who lacked the benefit of a Yale education.

The most obvious malformation resulting from over-exposure to the New Criticism in callow youth is the assumption that literature is not to be enjoyed and absorbed into the reader's living consciousness and value-system, but is something to be endlessly and prescriptively defined. A work of literature, as almost all great critics of the past have assumed, is a situational act of verbal communication involving context, a writer, the medium of language and its graphic representations, and an intended audience or readership. It is, in Wittgenstein's idiom, one of a number of possible "language games" that have potentially important consequences for our quotidian lives. But for those aesthetically shell-shocked by the Fugitive I Agrarian wing of the New Criticism, such a view is insufficiently exclusive. They must define the literary work more narrowly as either: (1) the expression of an élite author and his psyche (in a strong poet *agônists*, in Harold Bloom's terminology); or (2) its linguistic medium (de Man); or (3) the affective response of a cadre of professional readers (Fish).

I could provide detailed refutations of each of these and their satellite sophisms, should that course seem useful, but there is a more efficient way to exorcise the persistent malaise bequeathed by the New Criticism: those so devastatingly afflicted by the sins of the pedagogical fathers that they can do nothing but theorize compulsively could refrain from committing their nightmarish to paper and, instead, form a

literary consciousness-raising and therapy group. Though they might heal no faster, they would at least be helping to conserve America's forests.

DONALD H. REIMAN,
Carl H. Pforzheimer Library, C
East 42nd Street (815), New York
NY 10017.

Sir, — Paul de Man admirably reduces the practical consequences of his methodological assumptions in your symposium, "Professing Literature" (December 10): they would make English departments and "much smaller units". However, though he accurately surmises that such a reduction in size will not prevent the passing of those egregious beasts, one should be wary of jettisoning the principles which fattened them. English departments should continue to try to articulate meaningful relations between "aesthetic values and linguistic structures", rather than opt for the narrowly methodological luxury of constantly maintaining their compatibility or incompatibility as "an open question".

KENNETH R. JOHNSTON,
Department of English, Indiana
University, Bloomington, Indiana
47405.

Sir, — Many Australians do blame their labour problems on "migrants" from England and many Australian poets, perhaps in compensation for the "cultural cringe" of the past, to which Ian Donaldson alluded ("Professing Literature", December 10), profess little or no respect for English (as opposed to Australian or American) poetry. But Chris Wallace-Crabbe is not, so far as I know, one of these, and it was a strange (antipodean?) gremlin which credited him in your Contributors' notes (November 19) with a collection of poems entitled *The English are not Skilled Workers*. The book is in fact called *The Emotions are not Skilled Workers*, a quotation from the eponymous Mr. Malley. It might be well to put the record straight before the false version begins to gain a life of its own as an instance of Pom-bushing.

RODNEY PYBUS,
21 Church Walk, Ulverston,
Cumbria.

KEITH BANHAM'S *Scenes in America* has just been published.
JOHN BARRELL is a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge.
LINDA BLOOM'S books include *The Intellectual in Politics*, 1970.
ALAN BROWNMAN was recently elected Chairman of the Poetry Society's General Council. His latest collection of poems, *A Night in the Ghetto*, was published in 1981.
DAVID BUTLER is the editor of *Coalbrookdale in British Politics*, 1978.
FRANK BUTLER is the author of *Gloster: Church, State and Tractarianism*, 1982.
DAVID DONOHUE holds the Henry James Chair of English and American Letters at New York University. His most recent book, *Ferocious Alphabets*, was published in 1981.
H. S. FERRIS's most recent book is *The Abuse of Government*, 1978.
MARK GOLDRINO was Air and Science correspondent of the *Economist* from 1949 to 1974.
ANNE GOREAU's *Reconstructing Africa: A Social Biography of Africa* was published in 1980.
HUGH HADGORTON is a lecturer in English at the University of York.
CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS is Washington correspondent for *The Nation*.
HAROLD JAMES's book, *The Mamluks*, 1250-1517, is to be published this year.

Author, Author

Foules they pursue not, nor do
To spout the neat Indiscreet birds
do make;
Yet them all these unkindle kinds
feed upon;
To kill them is an occupation,
And lawes makes Fasts, and Lentis
for their destruction.

2 After about half a mile the
ridge turned off the main road,
we drove under the walls of the
till we reached a palazzo on a
eminence, and just on the
of the city. This was Seno-
bor's house, and nothing new
aged firm: it was situated near
magnificent and venerable
the old railway station, from
an imposing feature from the
of the house.

3 Look up, look up; up this
flesh, these three enormous
to the broken capitals, and the
nice as big as a house, all
the blue. Look over the walls,
green groves of white-steamed
lars; and over them to the
Lebanon, a shimmer of
blue and gold and rose.

Robert Byron, *The Road to Oxiana*.

On the Remarkable things which
have been transacted in them.
extraordinary Occasions of
them.
Sir John Vaubourg, letter to the
Duchess of Marlborough, Nov. 10,
1709.

2 After about half a mile the
ridge turned off the main road,
we drove under the walls of the
till we reached a palazzo on a
eminence, and just on the
of the city. This was Seno-
bor's house, and nothing new
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Lebanon, a shimmer of
blue and gold and rose.

Robert Byron, *The Road to Oxiana*.

Competition No 104
Readers are invited to identify the
sources of the three quotations which
follow and to send us the answers so
that they reach this office not later
than January 28. A prize of £10 is
offered for the first correct set of
answers opened on that date, or fail-
ure to do so by the next working day,
which case inspired guesswork will
also be taken into consideration.
Entries, marked "Author, Author
104" on the envelope, should be
addressed to the Editor, *The Times*
Literary Supplement, Priory House,
St John's Lane, London EC4M 4BX.
The solution and results will appear
on February 4.

1 Each purity of the hunted hare
A fibre from the brain does tear,
A skylark wounded in the wing,
A cherubim does cease to sing.

2 Is any kind subject to rape like
fish?
All unto man, they neither do, nor
fishers they kill not, nor with noise
awake.
They do not hunt, nor strive to
make a prey
Of beasts; nor their young comes to
beate away.

to the editor

to the editor

George Orwell

In my experience, very much of American university classroom instruction in literature proceeds according to the close-reading methods de Man endorses. And, thanks in part to his intellectually persuasive example, the "beofficially" that singular turns of tone, phrase, and figure [sic] bound to produce "the principle of bafflement at the possibility of any literary or linguistic meaning whatever."

In the revealing rhetoric of his hyperbolic conclusion, de Man opposes his "terrorism" of "theoretical rubbishness" to the sacred cows of ideal perfection in English department platitudes. While one does not lament the passing of those egregious beasts, one should be wary of jettisoning the principles which fattened them. English departments should continue to try to articulate meaningful relations between "aesthetic values and linguistic structures", rather than opt for the narrowly methodological luxury of constantly maintaining their compatibility or incompatibility as "an open question".

KENNETH R. JOHNSTON,
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University, Bloomington, Indiana
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RODNEY PYBUS,
21 Church Walk, Ulverston,
Cumbria.

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to the editor

George Orwell

In my experience, very much of American university classroom instruction in literature proceeds according to the close-reading methods de Man endorses. And, thanks in part to his intellectually persuasive example, the "beofficially" that singular turns of tone, phrase, and figure [sic] bound to produce "the principle of bafflement at the possibility of any literary or linguistic meaning whatever."

In the revealing rhetoric of his hyperbolic conclusion, de Man opposes his "terrorism" of "theoretical rubbishness" to the sacred cows of ideal perfection in English department platitudes. While one does not lament the passing of those egregious beasts, one should be wary of jettisoning the principles which fattened them. English departments should continue to try to articulate meaningful relations between "aesthetic values and linguistic structures", rather than opt for the narrowly methodological luxury of constantly maintaining their compatibility or incompatibility as "an open question".

KENNETH R. JOHNSTON,
Department of English, Indiana
University, Bloomington, Indiana
47405.

Sir, — Many Australians do blame their labour problems on "migrants" from England and many Australian poets, perhaps in compensation for the "cultural cringe" of the past, to which Ian Donaldson alluded ("Professing Literature", December 10), profess little or no respect for English (as opposed to Australian or American) poetry. But Chris Wallace-Crabbe is not, so far as I know, one of these, and it was a strange (antipodean?) gremlin which credited him in your Contributors' notes (November 19) with a collection of poems entitled *The English are not Skilled Workers*. The book is in fact called *The Emotions are not Skilled Workers*, a quotation from the eponymous Mr. Malley. It might be well to put the record straight before the false version begins to gain a life of its own as an instance of Pom-bushing.

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It seems that she may have told me in the 1970s that she told him in the 1930s that Asquith had indeed been her lover in the full sense in the 1910s. He was interested because during the First World War his father, Karl Walter, had been a minor supporter of Lloyd George (as a protégé of Horace Plunkett), whereas his father-in-law, S. K. Ratcliffe, had been a minor supporter of Asquith (as an associate of A. G. Gardiner).

It seems that she may have told different people different stories at different times for different reasons about a relationship whose true nature, as Stephen Koss says in his review of Asquith's letters to her (November 26), seems to be "impossible to ascertain, though tempting to speculate about", as long as the only available evidence is secondhand gossip.

NICOLAS WALTER,
88 Islington High Street, London
N1.

Sir, — An editorial or printing gremlin has confused the sense of my letter about the Asquith-Venetia Stanley correspondence (December 17, 1982).

It was a "complete set of her [Mrs Gendel's] working transcripts" which I used when writing *Politicians of War*, not a "complete set of his [Randolph Churchill's]".

CAMERON HAZLEHURST,
Department of History, Research
School of Social Sciences, Australian
National University, Canberra, Aus-
tralia.

Samuel Beckett

Sir, — In your issue of December 17, 1982, Harold Hobson gives your readers the impression that Beckett's *Rockaby* (1980) had its "European premiere" at the Cottesloe. Your readers, especially those interested in Beckett, might wish to have their consciences right. *Rockaby* had its European first night on October 16, 1982, at the Betty Nansen Theater in Copenhagen. Here Walter D. Ames, the famous Beckett director from the Schiller Theater, Berlin, made the play part of an exciting Beckett evening.

Mr. Strachey exaggerates both the defects of the present order and the merits of the proposed alternative. He is evidently obsessed by Bolshevism and makes astonishing statements about it. He writes as though the entire population — "160 million of men and women" — had voluntarily and consciously adopted it; "they have leapt out of the kingdom of necessity towards the kingdom of freedom; they have decided for themselves that it was from this turn of the spiral of history that men achieved Communism. They are all, including the children, united in favour of Bolshevism. Then what is the OGPU for? He never mentions this remarkable institution, but presumably he would not deny its existence or its activity. He admits that here, and there a lazy man may be found who does not want to work; but the function of the OGPU is to suppress anti-revolutionary efforts and has recently been very active. No impartial account of Russia could ignore it. He makes great play with the undoubted fact that they have not yet got Communism, but are still in an early transitional state. He ignores the earlier stage in which leaders tried their

which also included his other plays *Nah*, *Krupp's Last Tape* and *Ohio Inimicus*.

KARL-HEINZ WESTARP,
Department of English, University
of Aarhus, 8000 Aarhus C, Den-
mark.

Sir, — With all respect due to him, Harold Hobson (Commentary, December 17, 1982) has misread Samuel Beckett's *Enough*, in thinking that the two characters are two men. As the last line reads "Enough my old breasts feel his old hand" this is not so.

PARIS.

AVICDOR ARIKHA.

Gandhi

Sir, — Kenneth Ballhatchet's review of the film *Gandhi* (Commentary, December 10) was interesting, especially because he asked some unanswered questions which may well go to make a "Gandhi II" film.

Mr Ballhatchet queries whether Gandhi's hopes of attempting to revitalize the Indian village on traditional lines was economically viable. He puts "constructive programme" in quotation marks, much as if he felt it was a lot of idealistic goshaw.

It might be helpful here to recall what Gunnar Myrdal, the renowned economist, said of Gandhi: that "he was the only economist who made sense" to him from "that bunch in Delhi". Perhaps this is what certain *Le Monde* journalists, on one of the earliest visits to China, meant when they said that it was the only country that followed Gandhian planning. E. F. Schumacher wrote *Small is Beautiful*.

KYRIL FITZLYON,
2 Arlington Cottages, Sutton
Lane, London W4.

Fifty years on . . .

The TLS of January 5, 1933, carried the following review of *The Coming Struggle for Power* by John Strachey. It is one of the privileges of young and ardent world-improvers to point out the faults of the world as it is, to show that it is proceeding headlong to destruction and to indicate the true and only way of reform. They are very sure of themselves and of the correctness of their judgment. What distinguishes them from others who point out the faults — such as the cynics, the satirists and the pessimists — is that they have an infallible scheme of reform, which is wholly lacking to those others. To this school of ardent reformers Mr Strachey belongs. He contrasts the Englishman, "who follows blindly where his present rulers are leading" — to certain destruction, "with the Englishman who joins with that advance guard of the British working class which has already realized that the only possible future for Britain is as free Republic of an at first European, and later world-wide, Union of Soviet Republics." His earnestness cannot be doubted, and it is accompanied by more than common ability: he

The imperial Laocoon

V. G. Kiernan

JOHN GALLAGHER

The Decline, Revival and Fall of the British Empire
Edited by Neil Seal
211pp. Cambridge University Press.
£16.00.
0 521 24642 3

All the late Jack Gallagher's generation in his student days at Cambridge, or the intelligent part of it, felt what Tawney called the touch of the Zeitgeist on its shoulder, in the form of Marxism. The rest of his life he seemed to be devoting to an effort in shake it off. His need for a partner in most of his work may suggest that the effort was an uphill one. So in another way may his eagerness to immerse himself in the life of his college - a very conservative one; he was much less at home in his years at Balliol, a place not so well sheltered against winds of change. Such immersion was no escape also from isolation; he had no relatives, and apparently no close friends. College doings cannot always have been of satisfying substitute. Descriptions of him in this memorial volume, by admirers at both universities, show a man somewhat hectorically living up to the eccentric style of the Oxbridge eccentric.

Gallagher's colleague and former pupil at Trinity, Neil Seal, acknowledges that "his writings were distinguished more by their quality than by their quantity", but emphasizes the breadth of his influence. There must be many who can testify to the generosity of his aid to others, especially beginners. In his far from bulky collection of his work two familiar and two less well-known items are brought together. The first pair, both written in association with R. E. Robinson, are the celebrated essay of 1953 on "The Imperialism of Free Trade", whose recognition must be welcomed, and the chapter of the *New Cambridge Modern History* on "The Partition of Africa", mainly a restatement of views advanced in the authors' magnum opus *Africa and the*

Victorians. The Ford lectures of 1974 on the British Empire have been assembled from Gallagher's notes by the editor, who is to be congratulated on his performance of what must have been an arduous task. They display all the lecturer's salient qualities as a historian, weaker as well as stronger. A long essay on "Congress in Decline: Bengal, 1930 to 1939" is the chief fruit of his later years, when he turned from Africa to modern India; very regrettably he died. Dr Seal tells us, before even beginning to work up most of the materials he had been collecting.

Gallagher could admire Salisbury and Bismarck, those cynical realists, but men like the leaders of the Indian national movement, in Bengal at any rate, he could see only as seething politicians and ambitious scramblers, and the movement itself as a mere charade. There were plenty of self-seekers in the English and French revolutions, and there are scholars nowadays who regard the earlier of these as something that never really happened; probably no one has got quite far enough yet in the rewriting of history to question whether anything of note occurred in 1789. It is true that political activists in Bengal neglected the countryside in favour of Calcutta, but any of India's oilier provincials, and had a public life of its own with a strong Tannuany Hell flavour.

Gallagher brings out very well, moreover, the linked agrarian and communal problems, insoluble within the framework of liberal politics, that paralysed Congressmen. Since in eastern Bengal particularly, thanks to British rule, Muslim peasants were fleeced by Hindu landlords, it was impossible to win Muslim support by pressing for agrarian reform without forfeiting Hindu support. This dilemma was compounded by discords between provincial leadership and the Congress, planning its moves with a view to India as a whole. It was a situation ideally adapted to divide-and-rule tactics, of whose operations Gallagher might have taken more note. He speaks of the government's Communal Award, or allocation of seats, in August 1932 as showing a desire to "warp the Indian question

towards electoral politics"; it would have been more realistic to say "communal politics". Some viceregal quotes quoted on p.183 about Muslim loyalty against Congress as an imperative requirement offer a quite sufficient clue.

One must wonder whether a nagging lack of confidence in some of their ideas deterred Gallagher from putting his lectures into shape, however confidently they had been stated. These ideas were mostly negative, or dismissive. Two characteristic sentences near the outset exhibit both his race style, his Irish effervescence of imagery, and how firmly he turned his back on Marxism:

All theories to explain the growth of imperialism have been failures. Here and there on the mountain of truth lie the frozen bodies of theorists, some still clutching their ice-picks, others gipping their hammers and sickles.

A dictum which follows, that no single explanation of either the rise or the fall of imperialism can be adequate, must be accepted. But the causes offered in both cases are apt to look sketchy. Gallagher will not have it that "freedom-fighters" had anything to do with the coming of colonial independence: the British Empire dissolved in the end with "next to no fighting". This is correct by comparison with the Dutch, French, and Portuguese empires; but it underestimates the fighting in Malaya and Kenya, to say nothing of Ireland. Lloyd George had to sign a treaty with the Irish, we are assured, not because of the strength of nationalist armed resistance but because he was running short of collaborators to help govern the country for him. But collaborators only run short when there is sufficient pressure of patriotic opinion and threat of retribution to shame or scare them into changing sides, or lying low. Gallagher's line of thinking has some affinity with a school of thought, emanating from the same college, that progress at home in Britain has been due not of all to frothing agitators or rampant mobs, but to enlightened statesmen and conscientious civil servants.

Colonies may have been only a part of "the British world system as a whole", though much larger part than the one-tenth implied by the "tip of the iceberg" metaphor (p.75); but to argue from this that Britain worked by choice, when it could, through influence rather than direct rule, leaves out of account the firmly entrenched Service interests, the well-connected officers and officials for whom, from father to son, empire was bread-and-butter and champagne and adventure. Their most vociferous champion in later days was Churchill, who had been one of them. To practical men in the 1930s "the romantic imperialism of Churchill now looked obsolete". Yet it was a great deal more than one-tenth of what inspired him as Britain's leader in the Second World War; his leadership was the last contribution of the Kipling myth, for good and ill, to history. One consequence of it was the government's total impermeability to any common-sense proposals for a settlement with Congress, while the Japanese army marched towards India. In Indian eyes Churchill's Secretary for India was as much to blame for London's rigidity, but Amery was in fact powerless to budge. We hear him lamenting to Smuts in 1943 about his master's obstinate persistence in tactics "which mean that we certainly shall be kicked out in the end".

Kicked out by whom, if Indian nationalism was only the *troupe l'oeil* affair that Gallagher considered it? He credits the Empire with a phoenix-like recovery during the Second World War, and insists that the war did not, as had been feared, knock the worm-eaten structure to pieces. But when the war finished the Empire was very close to an inevitable end, for a long list of reasons. Britain was exhausted; India was exasperated by the hardships of the war years; there was now a far bigger Indian army than ever before, and it was officered very largely by Indians; Japan had destroyed the white man's legend; the Dutch were being driven out of Asia, and more slowly the French; there was American lobbying in favour of withdrawal to neo-colonial methods.

However, there are many more convincing things in the lectures. There

is a graphic portrayal of the complexity of empire affairs, every one of which every problem had to be weighed against a dozen others. Conspiracies were at their work in the later 1930s, when ministers and strategists were struggling to make plans to cope with the Japanese blowing up simultaneously in Europe and Asia; the whole system was so pulled hither and yon by outside forces that it seemed to be in a state of permanent collapse. There is shrewd appreciation of the deadliness of the "imperialist" in the Palestine mandate, and of the settlement had powerful backing for "the fox-hunting English Jews and their friends in high places", at the time of the British standing in Muslim India and the entire Muslim world. Downing Street was dazzled by the dream of a loyal colony in the eastern Mediterranean, garbaged with the we may call Jewish Civilisation. Africa after 1945 offers a picture of settlers from Europe "continually humiliated the British Government" and the Colonial Office could do no better than acquiesce.

Last year the Falkland Islands added fresh meaning to Gallagher's remark here about vain British hopes of American support over the sea base: "One should not put one's trust in super-powers". Strange that a man who could write like this should write so little. Perhaps at bottom he could not take life and history seriously enough. The editor's preface to the April 1, appropriately enough, Gallagher saw our world as an all-but-planned, making less sense than the ill-planned half reality, half make-believe, of collegiate bursings. If nothing else, he must have approached Nehru for his advice, when counselled by a harassed Congressman in Bengal in 1936 about lists of candidates to arrange for some Gilbert and Sullivan operas to be put on in Calcutta by way of light relief. But evidently the late relief Gallagher sought for himself did not work magic. He "damaged himself" by an unwelcome measure of living, including too much whisky. Sn ended a richly gifted historian who might have been a very remarkable one.

Tim Dooley

CLIVE WILMER

Devotions
63pp. £3.25.
0 8635 359 0

MICHAEL VINCE

In the New District
63pp. £3.25.
0 8635 368 X

NEIL POWELL

A Season of Calm Weather
63pp. £3.25.
0 8635 353 1

CHARLES BOYLE

House of Cards
64pp. £3.95.
0 8635 426 0
Mouchester: Carcanet.

In the introduction to his 1976 anthology, *Ten English Poets*, Michael Schmidt, the book's publisher, expressed his commitment to the volume by saying that the volume was in effect "a sampler of Carcanet's future poetry list". That he wishes to stand by that commitment has been demonstrated by the publication last year of second collections by four of the poets in the original anthology. When he first published these poets, Schmidt stressed the negative qualities that brought them together:

They did not write to order, they subscribed to none of the usual orthodoxes. . . . They address themselves to their subjects and craft, not to an audience. . . . They are not exploiting the medium but extending it into areas of intimate concern. . . .

While Schmidt was vaguer about the positive contribution his new poets' work represented, an underlying unity emerges from *Ten English Poets*: a use of classical caution, unobtrusive language, social conservatism and commitment to common experience rather than the exotic or extreme. They appeared rather comfortable writers - perhaps even self-satisfied - and deeply distrustful of innovation or excess.

Six years later, Carcanet's new wave of poets has come to seem even less of a homogeneous school as each poet reveals a distinctive personality, a particular talent or an absence of both.

The voices of urban late-century man

William Scammell

JOHN CASSIDY

Night Cries
100pp. £3.95.
0 86427 45 2

MATT SIMPSON

Making Arrangements
60pp. £3.25.
0 86427 40 3

PETER DIDDSBURY

The Butchers of Hull
60pp. £3.25.
0 86427 42 8

DOUGLAS DUNN (Editor)

A Rumoured City: New Poets from Hull
110pp. £3.50.
0 86427 41 X

Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books.

"Promising" is a dispiriting word to hang round any poet's neck, since it suggests that the articles of one's belief are still to be worked out, unpatriotically meant. It's the one that best fits three of these four collections: John Cassidy's *Night Cries* is a kind of manifesto, and continually disavows it at the same time. It is prompted by a kind of self-loathing, and too easily could have been quietly dropped (102 pages of short poems is too many).

Of the original ten, Clive Wilmer has probably gone furthest in establishing a voice and an area of concern that are particularly his own. Like Dick Davis and Robert Wells, with whom he studied at King's College, Cambridge, and with whom he shared the 1970 pamphlet *Shade Marjories*, Wilmer revealed in his early work an indebtedness to Thom Gunn. *Devotions* exhibits the same facility with both metrical forms and post-Poundian free verse that has characterized Gunn's recent work, but displays sharply contrasting concerns and an equally individual temperament.

The first section of *Devotions* opens with a quotation from Fulke Greville's *Cretico*. Like Gunn, Wilmer is aware of the possibilities Greville's work suggests for a lyric poetry which is rational and intellectually rigorous. Where Wilmer parts company with Gunn is in sharing Greville's conviction that the world is passing through a "Brazen Age", divorced from God's Word and corrupted by sin - an idea opposed to Gunn's powerful humanist optimism. Wilmer's particular relationship to Christianity - one of unquiet faith - is outlined in "The Advent Carols":

Now we bear candles eastward, bear them into
Involuted dark the Word should occupy:
Light disembodied swells the sanctuary
Where an old dream is mimed, without
Over again, I look from afar. Our sung
words
Are herald angels, and they announce his
name,
But lay no fleshly mantle on the King,
The one Word. And yet, in the song's
rising
is rupture, and day-spring in the mind's
dark:

For the one sanctuary, now, is the word
Made flesh - though it is big with child,
Invaded
By the dumb world that was before it was.
Language, then, is for Wilmer a sanctuary invaded by "the dumb world", but offering ways of pointing the mind in the direction of the order towards which, Wilmer believes, it aspires. In the book's central section, "Air and Earth", the flight of birds becomes emblematic of a similar aspiration. The agility and adaptability of birds provoke Wilmer to wonder. These qualities mock the human ingenuity that is confident about its explanations of nature, but powerless to halt the threat to the world that man's own nature represents.

And a dead world
we shall leave - crumbling
brickwork, rolling
caves and rafters, songless
wood
The song of birds, he argues, could provide the beginnings of an answer, were man willing to attend to it. It allows Wilmer to infer the reality of "those other worlds" man's history and learning "at best imply". "Worlds often glimpsed / beyond your earthworks, ramparts, palisades."

Michael Vince shares with Wilmer a desire to tease meaning out of his surroundings. In "Battleground", one of the better poems from *In the New District*, relics of a battle which might have been overlooked in a modern city take on an imaginative life of their own:

Towards the centre, they're still there if you
look,
Traces which haven't been tidied up,
Past the brewery some punched-out holes at
the top
Of a small block, and a scatter of tiny peck-
marks
Where silvers of metal pattered across the
facade
After you've noticed them once, the
patterns keep
Repeating themselves, like stars elusively
in a sky
Much older than this

Vince lives and works in Greece, and traces Greek subjects in what seems a deliberately plain manner: references to heat, figs, flies or the occasional

earthquake often being the only pointers to a poem's Mediterranean setting. In "Discourse", he writes "still I puzzle at the notion / we talked over, how nothing gets written / in a language specific / to the actions of love . . .". This rather earnest, puzzling tone is found often in the volume. It leaves the reader certain of Vince's seriousness, but less certain whether either the scenes he draws our attention to or his own responses have any great interest.

Where Clive Wilmer's attachment to tradition enables him to cast a cold, critical eye on contemporary life and yet avoid any note of arrogance, Neil Powell's similar stance can seem conventional and conservative in a disabling sense. "Where did you learn to try not to impress?" - Powell's praise of a pupil's "reluctant understatement" (in "Aftermath") captures a tone of smug, classish superiority which mars much of *A Season of Calm Weather*. In "After a Cremation", Wilmer presents the modish abandoning of "A ceremony on a text that had served well / Four hundred years of English in death as a personal loss, a shameful circumstance which he cannot separate himself from. By contrast, Neil Powell (in "North Hertfordshire") sees linguistic impoverishment resulting from social change, but remains a fool from what he observes:

Peshouse Lane, Dead Street, and Limekiln Lane
Kingsland Way:
The Ministry of Truth's at work again.
In Pepper Alley, off the Market Place

And So On

It's a habit one grows into
Unwittingly at first, then wildly

To hide behind, to cover up,
A nicely English ecstacy

To survive a revolution
By painting orchids prettily

A brush-stroke here, downwards,
Dividing subtly into segments

One hesitates to be definite
And then one weeps, and so on.

C. J. Driver

Daughters as mistresses

H. S. Ferns

DENIS JUDD and PETER SLINN

The Evolution of the Modern Commonwealth, 1902-80
171pp. Macmillan. £15 (paperback, £5.95).
0 333 30840 9

FREDERICK MADDEN and D. K. FIEDLHOUSE (Editors)

Oxford and the Idea of Commonwealth: Essays presented to Sir Edgar Williams
167pp. Croom Helm. £11.95.
0 7099 1021 5

JOHN CHADWICK

The Unofficial Commonwealth:
The Story of the Commonwealth
Foundation 1955-1980
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The Unofficial Commonwealth:
The Story of the Commonwealth
Foundation 1955-1980

The word "commonwealth" was introduced into the vocabulary of British politics early in the twentieth century, but that part of it which men in a variety of degrees governed themselves, as distinct from being governed by persons or bodies appointed by and ultimately responsible to the Government in London, Canada and India, for example, were both parts of the Empire, but it was evident enough that at the beginning of this century the political relations between the Canadian community and the Government in London were very different from those between India and London.

Daughter and I in my mother's house
But restless in my own.

Kipling thus summed up the relationship which the word "commonwealth" sought to express, and not only

the fact but the alternative to imperial federation and other schemes for centralizing power in London along the lines of the Indian model of imperial authority.

The British Empire is now so far in the past that no one encounters very many young people with O and A levels who do not have even a hazy notion of what or where it was. Denis Judd and Peter Slinn have found it necessary to remind readers that when Britain completed her last war of imperial conquest in 1902 by defeating the Boers in South Africa, the British Empire was much the largest political organization in history in terms of numbers and variety of peoples, of territory and of economic resources and commercial opportunities.

When the word "commonwealth" began to be used, the words "empire" and "imperialism" were not terms of opprobrium. Quite the contrary. The word "commonwealth" was introduced into the vocabulary of British politics early in the twentieth century, but that part of it which men in a variety of degrees governed themselves, as distinct from being governed by persons or bodies appointed by and ultimately responsible to the Government in London, Canada and India, for example, were both parts of the Empire, but it was evident enough that at the beginning of this century the political relations between the Canadian community and the Government in London were very different from those between India and London.

The masses are of no use, the literary class, which have unwisely warmed into life before a time of its nature, themselves are very powerful, may be doubted, but

their good will and cooperation, if we can obtain it, will of all events serve to hide to the eyes of our own people and perhaps of the growing literary class in India the nakedness of the sword on which we really rely.

The concept of commonwealth was not introduced into the discussion of imperial policy in order to draw a nakedness of power, it was taken up by people - at first mainly at Oxford University - who were concerned with the evident fact that the Empire, created by the defeat of European competitors in imperialism and of native populations who resisted the take-over of their societies, had political problems of incipient nationalism. These problems were not limited to areas and peoples who had been conquered but were also to be found in colonies of British settlement which had been created by a process dependent on the Mother Country and were able and determined to do everything the parent community did and more.

The word "commonwealth" by itself solved no problems. Deborah Layvin's essay in *Oxford and the Idea of Commonwealth*, a festschrift for Sir Edgar Williams, shows how one of the first users of the word, Lionel Curtis, tried with passionate energy to make it mean a British super-state, endowed with a federal constitution designed to create political union out of diversity.

As it turned out, the concept of commonwealth became the means of drawing together many political tendencies and arguments, and of establishing a goal for political development. Self-government became a reality towards which any community could work by learning the skills necessary for representative and responsible government. The imperiousness of these skills became a

purpose beyond that of disinterested administration. The white men's burden need not last for ever, it could be off-loaded, but only when the natives had become officers and gentlemen, educated administrators and, where appropriate, literate Christians. It became possible even to think of India moving by slow stages towards representative and responsible government, and the African colonies at some distant time in the future evolving out of the indirect rule by chiefs and tribal councils the means of self-government.

The essays in *Oxford and the Idea of Commonwealth* are not all of a piece. How could they be? They are a fascinating hodge-podge of information and argument about the several possibilities for policy-making, about the grounds of policy and about the moral origins and diverse insights into the nature of empire and of the men destined to govern and administer it.

There does not appear to have been much disposition at Oxford to explore or question how the Empire came about (or, at least, not until Jack Gallagher arrived, when the Empire was more or less over). Oxford's disposition was always to accept the political fact that the Empire was there and that the real questions concerned what to do with it: how to govern it and how to give to the task some kind of moral significance which civilized people could respect.

The discussion of these questions did not take place in *vacuo*. Curtis, for example, may have been obsessed with the goal of a British super-state, but he did not believe in building castles in the air. He wanted information, and he inspired people to search it out and Much of the historical, economic and social information gathered and analysed by Sir Reginald Coupland, Sir Keith Hancock and Lord Halsey did

not strengthen the case Curtis set up to make, but it became the serious substance of the case for a liberal commonwealth of nations.

What the Commonwealth is today cannot easily be stated. The smile on the face of the Imperial Lion lingers on, manifest in athletic gatherings, victory members of the Royal Family and the sort of good works described by Sir John Chadwick in his clear and agreeably written story of the establishment and activities of the Commonwealth Foundation, which helps the possibilities in Commonwealth relations voluntarily to maintain and develop their standards of service. Political and the Commonwealth can do little, and the list of horrors it has been powerless to prevent is a long one. On the other hand, it does express allegiance, which goes beyond lip service, to the hope that men and women can cooperate in spite of racial differences, religious dogmas and political practices, and legacy of empire of which no one need be ashamed.

The *Statesman's Year-Book* for 1983, edited by John Paxton, is now available (1982pp. Macmillan, £15.95, 0 333 31694 0). This, the 119th edition of an annual first published in 1861, is a predecessor of information and basic statistics that have taken place in the countries of the world since the previous edition. Part One, "International Organizations", offers facts about the United Nations and its agencies, the Commonwealth, the European organizations, Open, OAU, OAS and other regional groupings, while the bulk of the work is taken up with Part Two, "Countries of the World", in which economic, geographical, and political information is recorded for each country. The volume also includes maps of the industrialized world and Japan and world hunger and other

Sung words and the language of the tribe

Tim Dooley

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Mouchester: Carcanet.

In the introduction to his 1976 anthology, *Ten English Poets*, Michael Schmidt, the book's publisher, expressed his commitment to the volume by saying that the volume was in effect "a sampler of Carcanet's future poetry list". That he wishes to stand by that commitment has been demonstrated by the publication last year of second collections by four of the poets in the original anthology. When he first published these poets, Schmidt stressed the negative qualities that brought them together:

They did not write to order, they subscribed to none of the usual orthodoxes. . . . They address themselves to their subjects and craft, not to an audience. . . . They are not exploiting the medium but extending it into areas of intimate concern. . . .

While Schmidt was vaguer about the positive contribution his new poets' work represented, an underlying unity emerges from *Ten English Poets*: a use of classical caution, unobtrusive language, social conservatism and commitment to common experience rather than the exotic or extreme. They appeared rather comfortable writers - perhaps even self-satisfied - and deeply distrustful of innovation or excess.

Six years later, Carcanet's new wave of poets has come to seem even less of a homogeneous school as each poet reveals a distinctive personality, a particular talent or an absence of both.

Of the original ten, Clive Wilmer has probably gone furthest in establishing a voice and an area of concern that are particularly his own. Like Dick Davis and Robert Wells, with whom he studied at King's College, Cambridge, and with whom he shared the 1970 pamphlet *Shade Marjories*, Wilmer revealed in his early work an indebtedness to Thom Gunn. *Devotions* exhibits the same facility with both metrical forms and post-Poundian free verse that has characterized Gunn's recent work, but displays sharply contrasting concerns and an equally individual temperament.

The first section of *Devotions* opens with a quotation from Fulke Greville's *Cretico*. Like Gunn, Wilmer is aware of the possibilities Greville's work suggests for a lyric poetry which is rational and intellectually rigorous. Where Wilmer parts company with Gunn is in sharing Greville's conviction that the world is passing through a "Brazen Age", divorced from God's Word and corrupted by sin - an idea opposed to Gunn's powerful humanist optimism. Wilmer's particular relationship to Christianity - one of unquiet faith - is outlined in "The Advent Carols":

Now we bear candles eastward, bear them into
Involuted dark the Word should occupy:
Light disembodied swells the sanctuary
Where an old dream is mimed, without
Over again, I look from afar. Our sung
words
Are herald angels, and they announce his
name,
But lay no fleshly mantle on the King,
The one Word. And yet, in the song's
rising
is rupture, and day-spring in the mind's
dark:

For the one sanctuary, now, is the word
Made flesh - though it is big with child,
Invaded
By the dumb world that was before it was.
Language, then, is for Wilmer a sanctuary invaded by "the dumb world", but offering ways of pointing the mind in the direction of the order towards which, Wilmer believes, it aspires. In the book's central section, "Air and Earth", the flight of birds becomes emblematic of a similar aspiration. The agility and adaptability of birds provoke Wilmer to wonder. These qualities mock the human ingenuity that is confident about its explanations of nature, but powerless to halt the threat to the world that man's own nature represents.

And a dead world
we shall leave - crumbling
brickwork, rolling
caves and rafters, songless
wood
The song of birds, he argues, could provide the beginnings of an answer, were man willing to attend to it. It allows Wilmer to infer the reality of "those other worlds" man's history and learning "at best imply". "Worlds often glimpsed / beyond your earthworks, ramparts, palisades."

Michael Vince shares with Wilmer a desire to tease meaning out of his surroundings. In "Battleground", one of the better poems from *In the New District*, relics of a battle which might have been overlooked in a modern city take on an imaginative life of their own:

Towards the centre, they're still there if you
look,
Traces which haven't been tidied up,
Past the brewery some punched-out holes at
the top
Of a small block, and a scatter of tiny peck-
marks
Where silvers of metal pattered across the
facade
After you've noticed them once, the
patterns keep
Repeating themselves, like stars elusively
in a sky
Much older than this

Vince lives and works in Greece, and traces Greek subjects in what seems a deliberately plain manner: references to heat, figs, flies or the occasional

earthquake often being the only pointers to a poem's Mediterranean setting. In "Discourse", he writes "still I puzzle at the notion / we talked over, how nothing gets written / in a language specific / to the actions of love . . .". This rather earnest, puzzling tone is found often in the volume. It leaves the reader certain of Vince's seriousness, but less certain whether either the scenes he draws our attention to or his own responses have any great interest.

Where Clive Wilmer's attachment to tradition enables him to cast a cold, critical eye on contemporary life and yet avoid any note of arrogance, Neil Powell's similar stance can seem conventional and conservative in a disabling sense. "Where did you learn to try not to impress?" - Powell's praise of a pupil's "reluctant understatement" (in "Aftermath") captures a tone of smug, classish superiority which mars much of *A Season of Calm Weather*. In "After a Cremation", Wilmer presents the modish abandoning of "A ceremony on a text that had served well / Four hundred years of English in death as a personal loss, a shameful circumstance which he cannot separate himself from. By contrast, Neil Powell (in "North Hertfordshire") sees linguistic impoverishment resulting from social change, but remains a fool from what he observes:

Peshouse Lane, Dead Street, and Limekiln Lane
Kingsland Way:
The Ministry of Truth's at work again.
In Pepper Alley, off the Market Place

And So On

It's a habit one grows into
Unwittingly at first, then wildly

To hide behind, to cover up,
A nicely English ecstacy

To survive a revolution
By painting orchids prettily

A brush-stroke here, downwards,
Dividing subtly into segments

One hesitates to be definite
And then one weeps, and so on.

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JANET GURKIN ALTMAN

Epistolary: Approaches to a Form
227pp. Columbus: Ohio State University Press. \$20.
0 8142 0213 2

It is remarkable to what degree our most influential critics have underestimated the achievement of certain authors. The late F. R. Leavis's ranking of Richardson is a case in point: "Clarissa is a really impressive work. But [my italics] it is no use pretending that Richardson can ever be made a current classic again." Leavis conceded that he would "rather read Richardson than Proust" but only because Richardson had figured so prominently "in the background of Jane Austen", and still more dismally, because "the substance of interest in her is to its own way extremely limited in range and variety". Northrop Frye also relegated Richardson to a minor niche for altogether different reasons. In the *Anatomy of Criticism* he has virtually nothing exciting to say about Richardson – certainly no praise – except that Clarissa "figures in a whole procession of pathetic sacrifices in English low mimetic fiction".

To some extent Richardson's critical heritage owes more to a contemporary brother – Henry Fielding – than to modern critics. The war between them, as everyone knows, was virulent; it persisted into the nineteenth century and endures in our own time. Generally, those readers who have cherished the one have not been advocates of the other; and there is some validity in the proposition, that just as Richardson represented the composite of sham and moral bankruptcy to Fielding, those readers today who extol Richardson's artistry are also somehow aesthetically hypocritical. When Fielding wrote his by now famous letter of October 15, 1748 to Richardson, exclaiming "God forbid that the Man who reads this [Clarissa] with dry Eyes should be able with my Daughter", he captured the essence of a schism that continues to be felt. Richardson and Fielding once may have divided the hemisphere of British fiction; but Richardson's half has fared far worse than Fielding's.

Recently Richardson's critical fortunes have been improving, and for this the Women's Movement has been responsible: far more than any readable activity. The feminist movement has continued to argue, rightly in my view – that Richardson's fictions are unique in the ways in which women can be represented, and, what is more, unique in the manner in which literature and history interact.

Richardson was not, of course, alone in portraying so many types of women – especially fallen women – or alone in catering to a wide reading public. Defoe, and to a lesser extent Sterne and Scott, were comparable. In these respects, but only Richardson chose the epistolary form, and as an epistolary novelist stands head and shoulders above any other British novelist, not only of the eighteenth century but of all times. The relation of his technique to the reality he chose to portray – especially intimacy between men and women – is what distinguishes him.

The approaches of the two books under review differ radically, thereby providing abundant testimony to the multiple ways in which Richardson's fictions are being read. Carol Houlihan Flynn's book is subtitled "A Man of Letters", while Janet Gurkin Altman's is called "Approaches to a Form". Both are unabashed apologists for Richardson, but Altman's reputation for the letter is a kind of Richardianism, a kind of "epistolary" which is a kind of "epistolary" which is a kind of "epistolary".

Richardson's imagination and the variety of ways in which it relates to his culture, Altman, a self-proclaimed Derridian, considers Richardson among a host of other writers and selects texts "based on their instructive manifestation of epistolary", not out of any desire to understand a man or illuminate his times. Flynn cares about the eighteenth century as a diachronic cultural unit; Altman seeks out "syncretic generic studies".

Despite their differences Flynn and Altman are both concerned with "the rise of the novel", and each wants to show that "this rise" depended upon a new prose literature (over) in the process of parodying an earlier one. Flynn's "realism" is practically Ian Watt's, especially when she observes that Richardson "seems most ludic" when he "may in truth be the most realistic". Altman approaches "the rise" from the vantage of form and content, and perfunctorily introduces "playful reflection" as the crucial imaginative act: "the novel was born in an age when novelists like Diderot and Sterne had moved beyond storytelling to playful reflection upon history, fiction, and the very means by which fictional or historical events are recounted." But the decade of the 1760s is too late; "playful reflection" was a crucial element in the literature of the 1740s, if not before then, and Richardson, Fielding and Smollett were all writing "playfully" and paradoxically against a background of countless prose narratives ranging from low gutter trash to tales of aristocratic romance and high intrigue. English low mimetic fiction".

The curious, even noteworthy, aspect of this progress "beyond storytelling" is that all the authors involved – in England certainly Richardson, Fielding and Smollett, in France Prevost, Dumas, Cr billon fils – were aesthetically and morally serious. However obscure their overtistic intentions, still they attempted to wed art and morality. This fact of literary history may account for my sense that Flynn's book ultimately illuminates more than Altman's. "I am interested," Flynn writes, "in uncovering the conscious conflict in Richardson's best work between stated moral and expressed art, the tension between the artistic and moral principles." The ways that Richardson's imagination "subverted" and "transcended" these moral intentions occupy her throughout her book.

Yet Flynn is forced back upon Mrs. Barbauld's eighteenth-century question: "but what is the moral of *Clarissa*?" No one has ever been sure – not even Leavis – yet Flynn argues, paradoxically, that there is, and there is not, a moral: "although Richardson was a moralist, he granted himself extreme 'moral licence'. However allpervasive the position, this is morality consciously viewed. The unconscious artist 'creaking in spite of himself', and relating to social and cultural realities, constitutes for Flynn the essence of the unknowable: ie, precisely that domain which the critic can never take hold of. Yet this 'unknowable' forms the core of Altman's generic concern: to discover through 'epistolary' how the author's conscious and unconscious morality relate.

Epistolary is the key – the one domain, both critics maintain, requiring exploration. For Flynn, letters lie at the very heart of Richardson's "literariness". They constitute, *contra* Samuel Johnson, the "literary" of the eighteenth century, not only of the eighteenth century but of all times. The relation of his technique to the reality he chose to portray – especially intimacy between men and women – is what distinguishes him. The approaches of the two books under review differ radically, thereby providing abundant testimony to the multiple ways in which Richardson's fictions are being read. Carol Houlihan Flynn's book is subtitled "A Man of Letters", while Janet Gurkin Altman's is called "Approaches to a Form". Both are unabashed apologists for Richardson, but Altman's reputation for the letter is a kind of Richardianism, a kind of "epistolary" which is a kind of "epistolary" which is a kind of "epistolary".

letter" is the only instrument that can free Clarissa, yet it never does.

Freedom yes, but freedom for what? Freedom of authorial creativity? Freedom in the name of literary artifice? Or freedom to render the seemingly private world of Lovelace and Clarissa entirely public? Flynn's chapter on the role of fairy-tale elements in Richardson's novels aims to document such epistolary freedom, but her argument that Richardson employed fairy tales in the service of "transformation" is ambiguous. How do "transformations" pave the way toward epistolary freedom? When Flynn concludes that Richardson needed to write fairy tales to convince his readers and himself of the truth of his moral – "for his moral alone... was never enough" – she raises a big point. Her solution, that Richardson's

Looking to the worthies

Angeline Goreau

KATHERINE M. ROGERS

Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England
291pp. University of Illinois Press. £13.30.
0 252 00900 2

PRISCILLA ROBERTSON

An Experience of Women: Pattern and Change in Nineteenth-Century Europe
673pp. Temple University Press. \$35.
0 8722 234 7

ALICE CLARK

Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century
328pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £4.50.
0 7100 9045 5

"Until the last century, the task of accounting for women in history was conceived principally as a search for precedent by defenders of the 'female sex', who quarried mythology, the Bible, lives of the Saints, ancient and modern history for heroines whose accomplishments could be adduced as proof of women's large potential. This form of 'women's history' has a long tradition, going back to ancient times and including Boccaccio (*Concerning Famous Women*) in the fourteenth century, Christine de Pizan (*The City of Ladies*) in the fifteenth, Cornelius Agrippa (*A Treatise of the Nobility and Excellence of Woman*, 1510) in the sixteenth century, Nahum Tate (*A Present for the Ladies, being an Historical Account of Several Illustrious Persons of the Female Sex*) in the seventeenth century, the anonymous author of *The Ladies' Dictionary* in the eighteenth century. The briefest survey of such works reveals an overwhelming repetitiveness, no doubt partly because authors imitated their predecessors in some cases borrowing extensively. In almost one can help observing that every new generation taking up this subject proceeds as if from a *tabula rasa*, 'rediscovering' more or less the same set of extraordinary women and exemplary deeds.

Cataloguing 'women worthies' as Natalie Zemon Davis has pointed out in an influential article on the methodology of women's history, still describes the approach of a significant number of the studies of women to this method is that it distorts historical perspective by failing to take into account the social and economic context, or larger patterns of shifting values and mentalities. In the last ten years, a new generation of scholars (many of them influenced by the Annales school's withdrawal from *histoire  v nementielle*, or by the new insights of family history) has tried to expand the territory of 'Women's studies' and refine its practice.

While Katherine M. Rogers, in *Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England*, nominally acknowledges this new theoretical challenge, the greater part of her study belongs in spirit to the tradition of presenting an inventory of 'women worthies' rather than providing a new synthesis. Rogers's book

morality was "sadly inoperable" in his culture, stands on the brink of understanding – but does not achieve it. She comes closer to resolution when invoking Richardson's "certain bleakness of vision". In Richardson this "bleakness" usually falls short of tragic vision. For Altman *Clarissa* is "a tragedy of indirect communication", and the heroine is a "tragic isolation", but Richardson was not an *avant* tragic novelist.

Richardson's art captures a critical moment in the history of sexuality and, more specifically, in the evolution of Western hypocrisy towards that sexuality. *Clarissa Harlowe*, whatever else it may be, is the profoundest study of sexual double standards in the language, causing it to loom large in any history relating power and lust. Richardson's great strength is that he

alone was willing to probe the hypocrisy as it applied to the two sexes. Whether consciously or unconsciously, in *Clarissa* he debunked the traditional rubbish about "Christian marriage" promoted by his contemporaries, and penetrated to the heart of the problem: intimate relations between men and women. But exploration had to be conducted in extreme "case histories", even in terms of brutal rape. If his point was to be sufficiently clear, it is that both *Clarissa* and *Lovelace* are extreme sexual aberrants whose alien type of tragic dignity through their collaborative self-destruction. But the attainment in itself is far less significant than the countless types of hypocrisy implicated in their *lisons dangereuses*. No one else in the eighteenth century would see this, as say, even Richardson.

attempt in the introduction to place her subject in a historical perspective is seriously flawed by an oversimplified interpretation of Lawrence Stone's discussion of the growth of affective individualism in *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800*. Ignoring the substantial objections to Stone's theory that have been put by Keith Thomas and others, Rogers assumes that the gradual revolution in attitudes towards marriage that Stone describes can be taken as a *fait accompli* by the beginning of the eighteenth century. She further assumes that the development of "companionate marriage" automatically constituted an improvement in the 'actual situation of women' and infers that:

the change in attitude must have stimulated feminist thinking by increasing [women's] self-consciousness and their expectations, their belief that their minds were comparable to men's, and their hopes for happiness and fulfillment. Their improved position made women freer to express their wishes and more aware of the inequalities that persisted. This new consciousness enabled women to articulate their perceptions more clearly in unprecedented numbers. For the first time in England, a great many women were expressing themselves privately in letters and diaries, publicly in novels, tracts, and educational works.

Readers familiar with the lively correspondence of Dorothy Osborne, or the many diaries kept by seventeenth-century women which have been reprinted by historical societies, may be surprised to find them overlooked here, though they will hardly be much surprised to discover that women did not express themselves "publicly in novels" before the eighteenth century (though Aphra Behn is arguably an exception).

Most of Rogers's book is taken up with short accounts – almost in the form of an annotated bibliography – of virtually every woman who published anything in the eighteenth century. Though only a few of these identified themselves with any sentiment that might be considered feminist and some of them actively denied any such association, Rogers nevertheless concludes that these writers "laid the groundwork for the feminist awareness we take for granted today". Historians have recently unearthed considerable "feminist awareness" to the seventeenth century, but what is more importantly wrong with Rogers's claim is her assumption that the development of feminism in history is a linear process.

Priscilla Robertson subscribes to the same view. In *An Experience of Women: Pattern and Change in the Nineteenth Century*, she assures us that "this was the century during which women came together for the first time as women; to demand that they be recognized as equal human beings". Robertson does attempt to place the experience of women in a larger framework of social and economic structure, and brings together a great deal of research comparing France, Germany, England, and Italy, but her presentation of this material is marred by a tendency to generalize. Robertson contends, for

ARCHAEOLOGY

IAN HODDER, GLYNN ISAAC AND NORMAN HAMMOND (Editors)

Pattern of the Past: Studies in Honour of David Clarke

Algon, Cambridge University Press. £22.50.
0 521 22763 1

IAN HODDER

Symbols in Action: Archaeological studies of material culture

Algon, Cambridge University Press. £18.50.
0 521 24176 6

ANDR  LEROI-GOURHAN

The Dawn of European Art: An Introduction to Palaeolithic Cave Painting

Translated by Sara Champion
Type with illustrations. Cambridge University Press. £9.95.
0 521 24439 5

Archaeology of a certain kind is popular with the British public, but the kind of archaeology which is popular is far removed from the content of any of these three books.

Pattern of the Past is lavishly produced in attractive type and must have cost a mint to publish. It contains studies published in honour of the late David Clarke, and a considerable number of words in various chapters are devoted to eulogizing him. The eulogies are justified perhaps, when viewed in the development of archaeological theory in the recent past; but in general they are not just and certainly do not reflect the wider more candid published work of the editor of Clarke's collected works (Academic Press, 1979). The list of contributors to the volume is extraordinary – why are there no colleagues of Clarke's here, such as L. R. Binford, Colin Renfrew, etc., and why should anyone wish to know from Dalton of the Department of Economics of Northwestern University (Illinois) that he "was very fortunate to meet David Clarke and talk to him a dozen times [my italics] in the academic year 1973-4, when [he] was a visiting lecturer at the Department of Social Anthropology at Cambridge. [He] gave a paper... which touched on matters of interest to archaeologists [my italics]". The volume is a delightful volume of hilarity and serious talk (how "nice" – my envious comment). Add so on.

Pattern of the Past is also badly edited – cross-references between chapters are relatively numerous but they are ill-thought-out and shoddily inserted, often referring, usually without comment, to mutually opposing sentiments/views/theories; as it is one can judge there must be many lines in various places; there is no consistency of tenses between or within chapters; the index is poor; and the fact that only some tables and figures are referred to by page number in the text is infuriating.

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Recent research has revised the historians' date the transition from capitalism... to this century... the developments... Clark's... to a later period; but her observation that the situation of women... improve or deteriorate... "advancing" and "regressing" simultaneously in response to other... changes is still useful for thinking... far more intricate model, and if... about the history of women, and if... revolution in personal... turns the workplace to the home, and... ironically prove more interesting... Alice Clark herself could ever have imagined.

Postscript: IAN HODDER, GLYNN ISAAC AND NORMAN HAMMOND (Editors)

equally deservedly levelled at the essay by Ian Hodder. "Towards a mature archaeology", which starts off *Pattern of the Past*. Surely everyone will be turned off archaeology by reading that

the very identification by David Clarke of a separate material culture subsystem in which information about the orientation of a culture's perception was 'congealed', emphasizes that mind and conceived pattern are more than mere epiphenomena of social and economic functioning and adaptation. Even if the encoded information in material culture was seen by David Clarke as being mainly survival information, the retention, in contrast to his American counterparts, of aspects of the normative view, means that the door is still open for us to consider the internal structure and logic of cultural pattern.

Hodder does, however, make one easily comprehensible point worthy of note in this introduction (and repeats it several times in eleven pages); that "A mature archaeology must be fully integrated into the social sciences". It is therefore all the more regrettable that almost all the other authors in *Pattern of the Past* (notable exception being Andrew Sherratt in his clear and straightforward chapter on the plough and pastoralism) seem desperate to couch the material they have within some kind of impressive theoretical framework expressed in extraordinary jargon. At best these attempts result in first-year undergraduate level generalizations, at worst they emerge full of long-windedness, repetition and irrelevance.

The sort of archaeologist who is mainly represented in this volume is not primarily interested in presenting the results of particular excavations, nor in trying to reconstruct the particular chronological developments within a specified region or country. Indeed, the main thing which has happened to some members of the "British archaeological fraternity" over the past few years is their realization (a) that archaeology is to do with the reconstruction and understanding of past social behaviour, and (b) that the (or any) relationship between material culture and social behaviour, of whatever date and from whatever part of the world it derives, is worthy of study and analysis. With the work of Hodder, and a few others, we are once again getting new information of a relevant kind (ie in its societal context) about material culture. Many of the questions that Hodder asks in this chapter, and at least because of their bluntness, should interest those involved in the study of history and the past. It is now the archaeologists who are making the running with regard to the theoretical development of material culture studies – and their findings can now be seen to be of the greatest relevance both to social anthropologists and to historians – but they may well not be obviously fascinating or obvious appeal to the amateur "digger".

It may not be going too far to suggest that the general public may not even recognize that Hodder's *Symbols in Action* is archaeology. In this clear and attractively illustrated book, he presents the results of his fieldwork in various East African countries and examines the relationship of social behaviour and ideology to culture items. To the specialist the results are fascinating and, as Hodder is the first to acknowledge, raises a whole host of new questions just as they have answered a whole range of others. The importance of this book is not only in questioning acceptance of what material culture studies are about, but the explicit argument that 'archaeologists/anthropologists dealing with such materials (within a social scientific framework) must come to terms with the fact that different beings are to do with human "contextual" framework'. It is undoubtedly true that this realization in itself demands

From shards to societies

P. J. Ucko

understanding of the way in which humans manipulated their ideologies and their man-made objects to suit their own social and ecological interests.

The problem with archaeology as a popular subject is that in the past twenty years or so, it has moved far from an easy assumption that a particular pottery type or style of artefact can be equated with a distinctive human "culture". *Symbols in Action* shows clearly that in many cases artefact types cross "tribal" boundaries and, indeed, that material culture is a means by which people choose to make manifest different cultural statements – and that such statements may vary according to the particular historical context. Unfortunately this is not a simple matter – but then I doubt whether cultural activity ever is.

Hodder's book also touches on bodies of material which are often called "artworks" – with Nubian peoples' decoration of house-fronts, pottery, gourds and the human body. This is not one of the strongest parts of the book and it is striking that Hodder himself admits that his reliance on "syntactical rules" as an approach "can be severely criticized as being abstract, analytical and unrelated to the production of design and its use in social contexts". Nowhere does he come to grips with the content of the "art works".

This is not the case with the author of the third book under review, for Andr  Leroi-Gourhan is one of the very few major figures in modern archaeology who does confront the whole issue of art analysis and content. Leroi-Gourhan's impact on the study of Ice Age art was first reviewed by me in these pages in November 1963. His majestic intervention in the early 1960s turned upside-down almost all previous assumptions about the nature of palaeolithic art – few professional archaeologists nowadays continue to think that cave paintings, engravings and low-reliefs were simply the result

of mindless doodlings, or the haphazard activities of early men whose main preoccupations were hunting and fertility magic. Instead Leroi-Gourhan insists that Ice Age cave art is conceived with a complex intersection between image and symbolic equivalence on the one hand and the areas of cave passages on the other – the whole complex focusing round representations of horse and bison (complementary or opposed), as well as around a dichotomy of two different morphologically derived sets of "signs" – both animal representations and "signs" representing the opposition and complementarity of maleness and femaleness.

In this book Leroi-Gourhan attempts something quite new in recent palaeolithic art studies; he is not concerned in the first place with interpretation of the "meaning" of the art nor, at first sight, with added documentation of where particular animal species are represented in which area of cave passages/panels/crevices/etc. *The Dawn of European Art* focuses – in a highly individualistic way – on the techniques of the palaeolithic artists, and on the analysis of palaeolithic concepts of form and space, and concludes with an overall attempt to confront many general questions about what can be said about palaeolithic artists and the society, or societies, within which they worked.

For the general reader this is not an easy book to read and some of the ideas are very complex. For the specialist, a format which dictates an absence of references (both to specified panels of caves and to the literature) results in what is in many ways a rather depressing book – for Leroi-Gourhan makes a poor attempt to justify his recognition of dots as "a third category of signs" and is inconsistent in his interpretation of such terms as "masters", "works", "hands" and "the cave". Curiously enough, however, it is probably these very sections which will make the general reader feel at home. Certainly Leroi-Gourhan is

unique in being able to weave his webs of interpretation at the same time as being coolly and critically analytical within a maze of complex data. But no one can fail to be stimulated by their master's conclusion about Ice Age activities that

these facts tend to raise the question of considering the cave as a "temple", that is, a cult place accessible to all or at least a large proportion of the community, while the sanctuary denotes a sacred place with access reserved for a minority... Can we imagine a crowd pressing up against the decorated walls and taking part in rituals? Lascaux would lead one to think so, with its incredible jumble of engravings in the Apse as well as the richness of the Hall of the Bulls, the Axlal Passage and the Nave... Behind this decoration we can perceive the involvement of a whole community who maintained a few artists of high talent during the long weeks which they spent preparing the scaffolding, the colouring matter and the lights... Even if the paintings were executed in several stages, it implies an economic situation in which the group authorities surpluses to be expended in occupations of non-vital interest.

Archaeology should never have been simply equated with excavation; that the public mind came to see it so was bound to lead to problems. Attractive as it may be to the general public, "digging things up" is simply one of several strategies which have been adopted from time to time by those interested in the study of man's past. Good archaeology has always been a discipline in its methods and aims. On the evidence of the three books reviewed here, the discipline of archaeology is well and fit – notwithstanding the fact that, as always, it is sifting through and producing a lot of rubbish. It continues to be one of the most stimulating and challenging of man's creative enterprises.

The bones of the past

David Ridgway

S. C. HUMPHREYS and HELEN KING (Editors)

Mortality and Immortality: The Anthropology and Archaeology of Death
346pp. Academic Press. £15.80.
0 12 36150 X

The twenty-one contributors to this collective volume came together as a group of archaeologists, physical and social anthropologists and historians to discuss current research on death. Having already reviewed one book on the same subject (*TLS*, August 27, 1982), I was frankly aghast at the thought of renewing my acquaintance with what I had found to be an approach of "modestly" and "pompous irrelevance" to anyone who, like myself – actually works on an ancient cemetery. In the event, I am pleasantly and profitably surprised. That this should be so is a tribute not only to the hard work that has extracted these papers from a June 1980 meeting of the London Research Seminar in Archaeology and Related Subjects, but also to the attitude revealed in Sally Humphreys's Introduction. It is surely a sign that something useful has at last been achieved in this over-populated field if the editor feels it retrospect that "many" opportunities have been reflecting on the differences between our own cultures and those of the other societies and periods discussed.

Throughout, the focus is on human death; as a social phenomenon perceived mainly in terms of ceremonial or specified behaviour; only one paper is concerned with the question of "what the bones tell us" physically does not stray very far from the social frame of reference, but the conclusion that "those that have lived

together are buried together" covers the case of a pet lamb buried with a coin in the Romano-British rural cemetery of Oswestry, Shropshire. And there is food for historical and social thought in the demographic analysis of biological adaptation illustrated by the incidence of traumatic lesions and other conditions in a Nubian skeletal sample – although in noting the "increase in both aggressive and accidental trauma during the Christian period" George J. Armelagos and his colleagues make no allowance for the cheek-turning factor.

In this welter of comparative perspectives the archaeologists are clearly inclined to envy the quantity and quality of the evidence available to their peers in adjacent disciplines. Perhaps it is significant that the single most impenetrable and the single most original papers in this book are both contributed by the archaeologists – minority, respectively a mathematical demonstration by C. R. Orton and F. R. Hodson that "division of graves into groups or classes purely by examination of a histogram of wealth scores (however 'divided') is more difficult than it appears"; and Philip Rahls's richly documented plea for archaeological (and anthropological) attention to the neglected refractions of Christian death while there is still time.

Of the other papers, those by social anthropologists are the most consistently illuminating. While I remain convinced that modern ethnographic situations in New Guinea, Africa and Brazil will do enough to explore general or particular aspects of Bronze Age burials in Britain or Iron Age inhumations in Italy, I am nevertheless grateful to several authors here for widening my interpretative horizons. Particularly appreciative, Maurice Bloch's sympathetic anticipation of my feelings after reading his account of the complex relationship between social organization and certain ritual

features of material culture in Madagascar.

However subtle, archaeologists might be at interpreting material culture I do not think they could reconstruct the Sakaiya system or could fall to be misled into thinking that the tombs of the wife-giving groups were those of the dominant social group.

If an archaeologist unearthed a prehistoric community characterized by material remains similar to those left by the Sakaiya and used them to postulate the existence of a system like that observed in action by Bloch, he would be regarded as eccentric to say the least.

But no one who reads (or dips into) this stimulating collection has any excuse for not pondering another proposition: that it is equally eccentric to impose on one society, just as of modern, the terms of reference proper to another – one's own, say, or those that emerge from a reading of the Homeric poems or of Karl Marx. The moral for the beleaguered archaeologist is obvious, "as stated in 1899 by Sir Flinders Petrie: 'The responsibility of those who excavate is tenfold increased, as the extent of their care and exactitude will more than ever restore or ruin the history of the past.' The pitfalls in interpreting the archaeological material thus excavated are indeed great and bewildering: like the earlier collections of papers arising from the same distinguished Seminar (this book encourages one in the belief that there are valid reasons for living – however inadequately – to meet the challenge).

The Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of the Isle of Wight by C. J. Arnold (127pp, 64 pages of figures and 12 plates. British Museum Publications. £35.
0 714 1319 0) is the first full account of their discovery and excavation, concentrating on the Chiselm Down burial ground, and presenting a scholarly analysis of the grave contents.

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